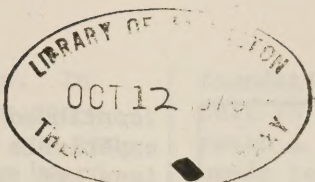


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Number One October Seven

INNER-CHURCH PROBLEMS

(The following sermon was delivered in Miller Chapel on Sunday, September 19. Its author, Dr. Juel, received his Ph.D. in 1973 from Yale University. He teaches New Testament at the seminary.)

by Donald H. Juel

Text: I Corinthians 1:17-25

The Corinthian church was a success story, the sort every travelling evangelist dreams of. Prior to their conversion, the Corinthians were nothing special: "For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth" (1:26). But that changed. The church had become a testimony to the power of God and a sign of his presence in the world for all to see. According to Paul, the Corinthians had been enriched in every way "with all speech and all knowledge...so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift." They had understood Paul's preaching. Paul had to argue vigorously, even use threats, to convince the Galatians that Christians were free from the law. But the Corinthians understood. "All things are lawful for me", they said. "There is neither male nor female", said Paul. And in Corinth, women threw off their veils and began to live as God intended.

Old superstitions were put away. The Corinthian Christians knew that idols and demons no longer had power over them. They spoke in tongues and could boast gifts of healing. They had become an extraordinary group of believers.

But they had problems. Somehow every aspect of congregational life provided grounds for a fight. They argued about shopping for meat, about the place of women, about marriage. Even gifts of the Spirit led to battles, pitting Christian against Christian. Things got so bad that brother ended up taking brother to court--an experience repeated with alarming regularity in the history of the church. It struck Paul as ironic that those who would be given authority to judge angels could not even settle their own quarrels.

I Corinthians is not one of the letters in which Paul attacks heretics. In many ways it's easier to be a defender of the truth, damning opponents because they preach another gospel. It's fights among believers that are the difficult ones. How can it be that good religious people, whose lives reflect God's grace and presence, end up doing things that are so obviously cruel or wrong? The Corinthians boasted of immoral acts that even ignorant pagans condemned. How can it be that religious principles and religious

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Viewpoint is an informal journal, a forum for frank and creative discussion. Essays, poems, short stories, sermons, and criticism are all welcome and should be submitted to the editor not later than the last week of every month. The editor, acting under the supervision of the editorial committee, reserves the right not to publish certain contributions. Opinions expressed in Viewpoint should not be construed as those of the administration, faculty, student body, or... even the editor. The opinions expressed here are those of the contributors.

Editor: Douglas Brouwer

(continued from page one)

experience can so completely cut Christians off from one another and from common sense?

The problems to which Paul addresses himself in I Corinthians are inner-church problems. His use of categories of wise and foolish, and his lengthy discussion of the wisdom of God and the alleged wisdom of this world, apply to insiders. It is the Corinthians who have been so richly endowed with spiritual gifts, who are the self-proclaimed wise who no longer understand the wisdom of God. Those initiated into the mysteries of the gospel have become fools. Somehow their religious experiences and beliefs had become a barrier to God and to a fresh hearing of his word. Consistent adherence to their principles resulted in the decimation of community life. Little by little, the gospel that had initially liberated the Corinthians had become a prison and had been transformed into a demonic force setting one against the other.

That experience is not unique to the Corinthians. It takes little reflection to recognize how easily religious beliefs get mixed up with perverted notions of what is right. Slavery, the oppression of women, the near extermination of the American Indian--all have been justified by appeal to Christian principles. In the recent battle among Lutherans, fidelity to the gospel has been cited as the reason for denying pensions to long-time pastors and teachers. Bitter purges of faculties and churches are not confined to Lutheran circles. The ferocity and the regularity of such struggles ought to be sobering. Religious principles and religious experience have given rise to some of the most noble thoughts and actions, but they have also motivated some of the most ignoble. The gospel can easily become a law, a new form of imprisonment rather than a liberating force; it can be used as a bludgeon rather than

as an invitation to fellowship. To be the gospel, God's word must constantly be distinguished from our own formulations of it; it must be heard afresh, in new situations and in response to new questions. And most of us are not basically good listeners.

That is perhaps the most important for the existence of theological seminaries. Their function is certainly not to make Christians. Other individuals and institutions have been far more successful at that. Nor are seminaries simply places to learn skills necessary for professional church work. As superb a training as you can get here in speech, the techniques could be learned elsewhere. Your primary reason for being here is to learn how to listen, to filter out all the noise that drowns out the voice of God. You are here to discover ways to hear the liberating word of God anew that will enable you and those you will some day serve to set aside unnecessary burdens and to break loose from stifling conventions that inhibit full enjoyment of the life God has set before us.

When you survey the complex scholarly apparatus developed by each discipline in our curriculum and the library full of books written by fellow scholars, it may seem that things have gotten a bit out of proportion. It may not always be apparent how study of Greek and Hebrew grammar or the obscure writings of a medieval mystic, or statistical methods for examining social patterns will help you become a better listener to the word of God. It's not always clear to those of us who teach. Yet it is a source of unending amazement how difficult it is for people to hear something new. That's even more true among students of theology. Something as personal and basic as religious beliefs has a way of locking us in as well as providing a necessary

foundation. It is often more difficult to break through the veneer to reach a devout, sincere believer who needs to hear a gracious word. I have a friend whose grandmother is a pious Greek Orthodox Christian. She firmly believes that God has pre-ordained certain people to salvation--a doctrine of great comfort for the elect. But she believes with equal conviction that she is not one of the elect. The gospel has for her become the most terrible prison conceivable. Her steadfast devotion to her tradition has erected an almost impenetrable barrier to a real hearing of the gospel. There are probably many Christians with intuitive sympathy for the movement of women's liberation who have been convinced by a particular interpretation of the New Testament that women have been ordained to a subordinate role by God. Tradition is for them improper form of confinement. Many Christians are sincerely convinced that the Bible is the expression of God's will, but they have been so persuaded by a particular defense of biblical authority that they are not free to see anything in the text that may not fit the theory. Some of the most ardent defenders of the Bible are least able to understand what the Bible actually says.

That is why the whole theological enterprise is necessary. We need help. We need to critique our experience and our views. In that task we can enlist the aid of others whose criticisms and insights are invaluable. That is why we study as a community. And the community within which we study need not be confined to this generation. Specialists within the family of believers can introduce us to past generations of believers whose wisdom and perceptions can enrich our own. And at the basis of our common enterprise is the Bible, on which tradition is a commentary.

Somehow through study of the Old and New Testaments, the tradition of the church, and analysis of individual and communal experience we hope to achieve new insights, to understand at a more profound level the mystery of God to which we again and again return in wonder.

Those breakthroughs occur. It is not just converts to the faith who experience renewal and new insight. It's easy to get hung up on a single conversion and to live from the warmth of that experience. That's not enough. Perhaps the best role model is not Paul, but one of the reformers like Luther or Calvin or Wesley. Before his so-called conversion, Luther was a Christian, a baptized believer. But the gospel to which he had dedicated his life was not for him a liberating power. He was dissatisfied with himself and his life, and his study of scripture only made him more restless. Yet in his struggle with some of the texts he hated most, the gospel cracked him open--and his life was immeasurably enriched. Being a Christian became for him an experience of liberation rather than imprisonment. And as a result of his extraordinary career, a fresh, new understanding of the gospel swept across Christendom.

Few of us will experience such dramatic change as a result of our study. The preliminaries may seem tedious and unproductive. But hopefully during your years at Princeton you will be given a glimpse at least of the possibilities God has set before us, and that the experience will be refreshing and enlivening. For some, the course of study will be painful--both academically and religiously. Others may find it difficult to understand the pain. It is important at the beginning of your first year that each of you understand that all of us are involved in the

educational process together. Although the change will be more radical in some than in others, if you do your jobs and we do ours, none of us should be quite the same in three years. And when you leave, we should all know better how to listen and where to look.

Paul's first efforts in Corinth weren't enough. Things may have quieted down for a while, but new difficulties soon surfaced that required more struggle and additional letters. The task of critical reflection is never finished. A fresh experience of the presence of God soon becomes a stale memory, a dead weight that can anchor us to the past. A new insight can easily become a bulwark against further exploration. Today's gospel is tomorrow's new law. The constant searching is part of the life to which we are called.

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ... For from him and through him and to him are all things.

That's not a put-off. It's an invitation to explore the mysteries of life and the richness of God's grace.

WHAT PRINCETON MEANS TO ME

(During the first week of classes, the following four juniors were overheard expressing interesting and, in some cases, novel opinions about the seminary: David Moore, Chris Iosso, Walter Lawn, and Barbara Eckman. The four were then asked to articulate their opinions for a prestigious local publication. Not knowing any better, they jumped at the chance.)

by David Moore

There is a story about three religious leaders engaged in a panel discussion on a variety of social and ethical issues. When queried the Rabbi would respond, "The Torah says...;" the priest, "The Pope says...;" and the Protestant minister, "Er, ah, well it seems to me...." It is this last remark that I find to be a prevailing notion among students at Princeton Theological Seminary. It is not only students but also graduates of this institution now serving churches who share this attitude.

What I am discovering is that people do not hold a common definition of the word "Christianity." One is free to pick and choose from a number of "live options" sometimes contradictory. This process is called "finding your own faith." Now I am not objecting to this process or pilgrimage. But what I am frustrated by and object to is the ambiguous, all embracing, and all encompassing use of the term "Christianity." Christianity cannot both be the only way to the Father and also one of many. Either the word has a definition common to all, a standard by which we can "test our-

selves to see whether we are holding to the faith," or it is used in ambiguity and vagueness in which case communication is seriously hampered.

It is my impression that many people at the seminary have opted for the latter, perhaps so as not to offend or exclude anyone. But gone is the question of truth. This is my observation over two weeks. Hopefully as I continue to meet and talk with new people, this impression will change.

by Chris Iosso

"What a disgustingly middle-American crew they all are," said one of my fellow scoffers as we looked at the married juniors and their wives having their pictures taken on the chapel steps. Almost all were well-dressed and happy-looking WASPs--just like us, except for the wives. "If only our Christianity were equally apparent" might have been the appropriate thought, but instead I think we thought about the female students (not realizing, at that point, that the more married students there were, the better chance we would have with the women in our class). The picture taking, though, was like a wild generalization of the countless ridiculously similar introductions we had made in the last few days. Despite the label "juniors," and the fact that a large number of our class have actually taught somewhere previously, in our initial conversations (and our idle speculations) we had often reduced ourselves to the level of college freshman.

What my friends were, in fact, were college seniors: jocks, clowns, nerds ("throats" where I went to school), preppies, and even a few

freaks. We identified each other best by our various colleges or regions of the country. In this first week, though, we began to try out the roles of seminarians. At least, we have exchanged our earlier roles for their theological counterparts; pietists, activists, conservatives ("fundies" when they're not around), liberals, and even a few swinging Calvinists. We have also come to identify ourselves by our dorm names, and I myself, in a recent visit to Yale Divinity School, as a Princeton seminarian.

More seriously, however, the sign of our seminarification lies in the breakdown of our superficial homogeneity. As the conversations and prayer mornings go deeper, and the circles become tighter (yes, already) the heterogeneity in approaches to theology and devotion becomes both more apparent and more significant. I very much appreciate the fact that our circles and roommate combinations embrace a wide spectrum of theological perspectives. At least, to the extent to which my friends and I presume to have serious positions, I've really enjoyed discussing their differences.

Clearly my own experience of heterogeneity has prevented me from giving any definite impressions about the place. To the extent that this, too, is a generalized introduction, though, perhaps a plug-in-your-own-friends-and-conversations is the wisest course (I'd hate to over-generalize). Nevertheless, from my quick trip to Yale, it seems that there may be yet a higher homogeneity lying behind the lack of common mindset here.

This last mystical quality seems to be a matter of tone. Though many here may sleepwalk in dogmatic slumber and intellectual turpitude, among those with whom I've become in-

involved, of whatever position, there is much less "touchy-feely" theology and vocational uncertainty than I met on my trip. This greater seriousness, in my view, may have something to do with the fact that those of the more critical, "liberal" position here have had considerable contact with, or have possibly worked through more conservative positions, while at Yale the more common liberal views are more negative reactions to conservative positions, and thus more prone to theological faddism and feelings of personal vulnerability. Not that this is much more than what a comparison of the admission catalogues would indicate, but it would place Princeton much more in touch (whether for good or ill) with American Christianity in general.

If I may return to the collegians perspective for a moment, though, I would mention what were for me positive and negative novelty. On the positive side, I like having a president who is not the figure-head/fundraiser that I'm used to (poor Dr. Felmuth has the latter role). I also like seeing and talking to professors informally around the campus (though it is disconcerting to see some of them fall asleep during lectures). On the negative side, already I don't think I'm going to enjoy working through my Christmas vacation. And I hate the bells at 8:00 in the morning.

by Walter Lawn

This place hits you all at once. An easy, four-hour drive from home, and here I was trying to figure out an unfamiliar campus and trying to find a place in a crowd of complete strangers. I joined groups of juniors who were trying not to seem as

lost as they felt. I put on the look of hopeful confusion that most of us were wearing; in the intervals of orientation I tried to figure where I was.

We are all supremely confident now. Visitors to the campus will ask us what year we are in. And I have begun to sort out the impressions Princeton Seminary has made on me.

Most startling was worship. A high church Episcopalian simply is not used to Presbyterian worship services. Presbyterian sermons. And more Presbyterian sermons. With the initial shock over, however, (and orientation is designed to knock out the faint of heart at one blow; if you can survive it, you can survive anything), I have begun to appreciate a new style of worship. It will be a continuing challenge and pleasure to learn not only to participate in, but fully to enjoy new ways of worshipping.

Less pleasant and more surprising was the effort I found necessary to be accepted. There is always some difficulty in joining a new community, and it always helps to have some of the insurance agent or encyclopedia salesman about you at these times. It seemed that a special effort was required here, however, greater than in other places. I would have attributed this impression to my own shyness, but others I have spoken with have had the same experience. I cannot explain this, but it is a significant impression.

Finally I must describe the most enduring and disturbing impression the seminary has made on me. It has to do with models of ministry.

The model of ministry which I use is of the minister called out from the community--the church--to lead it in praise and service. One seeking ordination presumably brings

with him or her the talents and interests which are necessary to his ministry, whether that ministry be pastoral or other. At seminary, the candidate refines and sharpens his talents and broadens his intellectual and spiritual base so that he may better serve his community in praise and service. In my own case, I came here wanting to improve my skills in Old Testament study, and to find, by exploring the possibilities, if I have a calling to the ordained ministry.

When I arrived I found an entirely different model governing the actions of most people here. It is the model of a minister called in to a church, a professional skilled in the arts of preaching, church administration, Christian education, and exegesis. This makes the seminary a professional school, preparing good men (and an occasional woman) for the professional ministry. It is even in the language of the seminary: for example, the Office of Professional Studies.

This creates an atmosphere where many if not most students are taking courses not because they have a particular interest in the content of those courses, but because--for example--every UPUSA minister must study Greek. In my Greek course we are not trifling with such minor points as accents because all anybody in the class will want to do is read the New Testament a little. Education is actually being sacrificed--in a small way, admittedly--to the practicalities of professional training. That is a very dangerous way for a seminary to begin to move.

This is a rather gloomy way to end an essay on my impressions of the seminary. It is, however, the impression which has the most far-reaching consequences, whether good or bad; consequences with which we all shall be living for three years.

by Barbara Eckman

When I was asked to write, as an entering junior, an article relating impressions of my first week at Princeton Seminary, what first came into my mind were such subjects as male/female relationships on campus, and the academic enterprise viewed (as was mentioned so often during orientation) in light of Jesus as the Truth, as well as the Way and the Life. Perhaps God will grant me the insight and wisdom to attempt these topics later in the year as he continues to sort through them with me. But for now, I have chosen to share my personal encounter with an odious enemy which unfortunately appears to be quite powerful in the Princeton Seminary community: the urge to prejudge, categorize, and label.

But labels, you may object, are important tools in analyzing and understanding people or things. It is true, I admit, that the process of understanding often, or perhaps even always, *begins* with categorization. But when the initial judgments and labels prevent the categorizer from continuing to seek a deeper truth about the categorized, then the categorizer often fails to benefit from the opportunities for growth that may await him or her in a relationship with the categorized.

I entered the seminary with a legion of prejudices about the institution and the members of its community. Since I received my undergraduate degree from Princeton University, I have had a chance to look over and size up the seminary before even arriving as a student. While I looked forward to warm friendships, stimulating academic encounters, and a supportive Christian atmosphere, I nevertheless expected, quite frankly, that any real spiritual growth that I would experience during my stay

here would probably come out of private prayer or the biweekly prayer meetings held in suburban Philadelphia by a small charismatic fellowship of which I am a member. I simply did not expect that the Holy Spirit would be given much of a chance to move in power here in what I had concluded to be a "mainstream, formal, respectable" Presbyterian seminary.

I immediately began to discover how wrong I was. On the retreat at Ocean Grove, members of the administration delivered vibrant addresses which, though not always couched in the vocabulary to which I am accustomed, were fired by Christian love and expounded deep insights into the mature Christian life. (I was especially excited by the emphasis on the need for discipline in our daily lives; for we are, after all, servants as well as children of God.)

One evening less than a week after the retreat, I found myself, quite unpremeditatedly, in the midst of a long, probing discussion with a friend whom I had previously dismissed as a "typical uptight, formal Presbyterian." I was astounded by his spiritual maturity, deep love for the Lord, and radical commitment to Him. We prayed together, spontaneously, I with my informal evangelical expressions like "Praise the Lord" and "Blood of the Lamb," and he with his liturgically-based "Almighty God" and "I do confess." Thus, we shared our two different perspectives on our common life in Christ, enhancing each other's understandings of the one God, and glorifying him in a way that acknowledged and appreciated both his tenderness and his majesty.

So during the first week of my seminary experience, I discovered that all Christians who know Jesus in a personal way are "spirit-filled."

the minister's man. He has been hailed as being all right. His opponents said that he was faultless. Pharisees, scribes, and priests said, "He is a friend of sinners and publicans." God the Father said, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." My chief executive was wonderful, even in death, for creation trembled and heaven was satisfied.

The only platform my president has, is in his word, the Holy Scriptures--a sample of which follows:

His *education* plank calls for anyone knowing and accepting the truth to be made free; it also advocates "fear of the Lord" as "beginning of wisdom."

His *amnesty* plank provides forgiveness to all who repent and accept him as Lord and Savior. The Scriptures read, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Jesus himself said, "Whosoever comes to me, I will in no wise cast out." He also requires those who believe and accept the Fatherhood of God to show it by practicing the brotherhood of all men.

As far as *peace* concerned, he proposes to give us his peace, which the world does not understand. This peace comes not by the sword, but by love. He warns, "All who take the sword will perish by the sword."

For shelter, his *housing and urban development* plank admonishes men to seek daily that city whose builder and maker is God and to work for the day when our cities, our schools, our families, and our homes radiate under the influence of divine grace. We are also reminded that "God is our refuge and our strength." The Psalmist writes, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations."

In his *labor* plank, we are told

"the harvest is great but the laborers are few," but "go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, I will give you." No matter how long we work in the vineyard, we are all working for the same thing--eternal life through Jesus Christ. He admonishes his followers to labor that the day will at long last arrive when God's kingdom will be established here on earth as it is in heaven.

As commander-in-chief of everything that--and more--Christ's *defense* plank promises that our enemies will be made our footstool." We are also told that if we dwell in his secret place, we will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

As far as *welfare and social security* are concerned, we are told by one who knew him and followed him, "I was young and now I am old, and I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." We also have the assurance of an open-door policy for we read, "Behold, I set before you an open door."

His *foreign policy* plank says, "Ho, every one who thirsts, come to the waters and he who has no money, come, buy, and eat!" The book of Revelation speaks of that multitude that no man can number, composed of different kindreds, races, and tongues. All are welcomed into God's "forever family."

The *transportation* plank reads, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me, meaning "I'll take you there." His system of "mass transit" seeks to usher men and women from "disgrace to dignity" as sons and daughters of a gracious God by faith, not by force and generosity, not by guns.

Health care is wonderful, for my president has cleansed lepers, given sight to the blind, raised the dead, liberated the demonically oppressed, and restored the deaf and the dumb. He desires that this nation and the

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world be healed for the Scriptures tell us, "...but for you fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go forth leaping like calves from the stall."

His *human rights* program calls for us to display the benefits of the new life in him by "loving justice and doing mercy." He desires "ethical currency" to be paid in dividends of righteous living with priceless interest rates of developing whole, well-rounded personalities by allowing all aspects--social political, economic, and private--of our lives to mirror the reflections of the love of God within us.

From this sample of his platform, as given in the Bible and written by campaign workers, the prophets and apostles who were inspired by his campaign manager, the Holy Spirit, you can see that Christ is more than qualified to become president of our lives.

His candidacy and ultimate victory originated somewhere in eternity, for man needed a redeemer after man sinned. Heaven and earth were searched diligently for one who could meet the qualifications to pay the penalty for man's sins. Angels volunteered, but were disqualified because they had no blood. Patriarchs and prophets of the ages were examined but failed to meet the requirements because of blemishes within their characters. The search went on--until someone looked behind the altar, and saw one looking as a lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

Nominated by prophets and campaign workers--including apostles, preachers, missionaries, and deacons--Christ won an earth-shaking, dead-raising, veil-splitting victory on Calvary, defeating (by a landslide) Satan, death, hell, and the grave. In his victory statement, he echoes, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." His victory was verified by his father

who raised him from the dead.

He sends forth his Church to ask the world to come to his inauguration as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" by voting for him with our lives, repenting of sin, receiving and confessing before men as Lord and Savior and to exemplify this Lordship in all that we do and in all that we say.

In conclusion, vote for his electors of love, faith, joy, peace, patience, longsuffering, moderation, service, mercy, hope. Be prepared to attend the celebration and the beginning of his eternal administration where war has surrendered its sword to peace, sin concedes defeat, love wins over hate, lawlessness is out of order, the war on poverty is finally won, alcoholism and dope addiction are finally eradicated, segregation, racism, communism, capitalism, and nazism are outlawed; where doctors, policemen, and orphanages are torn down and replaced by mansions; where death and disease are placed on permanent suspension from the human family--and, then, there shall be a new song, a new anthem. I like to think that it will not be "God Save the Queen" as it is in Britain, the La Marsaille as it is in France, the Star-Spangled Banner as it is in these United States. It will be a new song, a new anthem--a song that someone said even the angels can't sing. That song will be "I have been washed in the blood of the Lamb."

JIMMY CARTER'S VISIBLE RELIGION IN RELATION TO THE INVISIBLE RELIGION AND THE CIVIL RELIGION

(Stephen Hollaway earned his A.B. from Princeton University and his M.A. in English from Duke University. The bespectacled Nashville native is currently a second-year student in the M.Div. program.)

by Stephen Hollaway

How is Jimmy Carter's campaign operating on a religious level? How does Carter's obviously religious faith function symbolically in a society characterized by the invisible religion of individual autonomy? These are the questions to be faced in this essay, questions raised by the phenomenal success of Carter's earlier campaign which stressed the religious language of love and rebirth, a campaign which has faltered when it has moved from symbols to issues and partisan politics. This essay will not attempt to evaluate the quality of Carter's personal piety nor to judge his sincerity. We are concerned rather to show what Carter's success reveals about the nature of American society.

Those who see American society as secularized have reacted with shock at Carter's success. They find it almost incredible that a visibly religious man--a Southern Baptist no less!--could have an appeal for the secular voter. This phenomenon does not correlate with the natural laws of secularization deduced some years ago from the selected data of Northeastern thinkers. If we must think in their categories, it would seem that Carter represents a "sacraliza-

tion" of politics rather than continued secularization. Let us hope that this phenomenon and the constant rising of interest in conservative "Evangelical" Christianity will put the nail in the coffin of the theory that simple secularization is what modernity is all about.

Carter's success makes much more sense in terms of Thomas Luckmann's thesis in *The Invisible Religion*. "Evangelical" Christianity--the religion of personal salvation--is part (even the major "denomination") of what Luckmann calls the "new social religion," the religion of individual autonomy. In its popular form, the American religion of personal salvation is not simply a hold out of traditional religion. It is a form of the Christian message adapted to an atomized society, adapted so radically that it no longer functions in terms of institutions but only in terms of autonomous individuals. As Luckmann says, the American church survives because it has adapted its religion to the changes in modern society. The form of the new social religion in America involves Christian symbols, and it is the symbol of rebirth which has particularly surprised many observers of Carter's campaign. These secularists might be shocked at the findings of Greeley and McReady (cited in the *National Review* article on Carter) that 45 percent of the U.S. population claims to have had the experience of being "born again." Michael Novak believes that 40 million adults, two-thirds of all white Protestants, share this experience. This is clearly not an experience alien to American modernity; it is characteristic of a large part of modern society. Carter is merely one of the first major political figures to come from this segment of society (although there have been outspoken minor figures, such as Mark Hatfield, Harold Hughes, Chuck Colson, et al.). One suspects

that the major reason Carter is first is that the upper classes from whom leaders are drawn do not experience modernity in terms of Christian symbols.

The religious issue in Carter's campaign is not an issue of church and state. Carter is not the church, nor does he represent the church. He comes from the highly individualistic religious tradition characteristic of the U.S. The question here is one of religion and politics, not one of church and state. How does Carter's political campaign operate on a religious level? By "religious" we mean a symbolic level which refers to a transcendence. While this may seem a broad definition of the religious, it is necessary to guard against identifying the religious with traditional Christian symbols and language. But even using such a broad definition, it is still clear that Carter is the only candidate for the Presidency who refers to transcendence at all. Others base their appeals on functional rationality; Carter speaks of love. Since winning the nomination, Carter has increasingly used the language and rationality of the bureaucracy, the language of partisan speechwriters.

Journalists have discussed the religious issue chiefly in terms of fear of a president with any strong religious identification comparing Carter's problem here with that of Al Smith or John Kennedy's with voter wear of Roman Catholicism. This has almost nothing to do with the reaction to Carter's religious statements. Fear of Catholicism was fear of an institution, fear of a church bigger than the United States, and the issue was for many one of church and state. Carter is not identified with an institution. His is a religion of autonomous individuals. The Southern Baptist Convention is Carter's kind

of institution: it is voluntary (as Carter says the U.S. government is) and its main tenets are "the priesthood of every believer" and the autonomy of the individual congregation. Nevertheless, Southern Baptists have a strong sense of identity. An article in the *New York Times* (May 8, pp. 25, 50) calls attention to the growth in numbers and diversity in the denomination, specifically because it is Carter's denomination. Another recent article by Southern Baptist historian Walter Shurden (*Student*, June, 1976, p. 47) sheds even more light on the institutional ethos, discussing the principle of cooperation without domination:

One of the ironies and paradoxes of contemporary religious life in America is just this: Southern Baptist churches are among the most independent churches in the world; the Southern Baptist Convention is one of the most centralized denominations in America....Southern Baptists' cooperation is voluntary but vigorous.

This might be suggestive of Carter's understanding of the federal government as an institution in relation to states and municipalities, but even more in relation to individuals. "Our government," Carter says in his autobiography (p. 154), "can and must represent the best and highest ideals of those who voluntarily submit to its authority." Of course, this concept of voluntary submission reflects the liberal heritage of possessive individualism and the social contract, but when Carter says "represent" he also means "symbolize." The government must symbolize the ideals of the individuals who submit themselves to it. Carter seems to understand that political leadership involves a sacral function,

and he understands that people have felt alienated from the primary institution of government because it no longer symbolizes their ideals as autonomous individuals but has been objectified into a machine dominating the individual.

When Carter forgets his symbolizing function--boring us with specifics or revealing himself as too human in *Playboy*--his campaign loses its effectiveness. Ford, "hiding in the rose garden," begins to seem a more potent symbol than Carter even though Ford symbolizes an alien institution rather than the common man. Any sacral function is better than none.

Analysts have proposed several inadequate models for understanding the success of the Carter campaign:

(1) *An evangelical bloc vote.*

There is no evidence that this has occurred in the election process thus far, and this model seems to have been developed by analogy with the Catholic bloc vote. The very individualism of "evangelicalism" precludes the possibility of a bloc consciousness. While polls do show that voters view Carter's religious beliefs as a factor in his favor, they do not show that a majority of Carter supporters share this belief. Observation of campaign workers in Pennsylvania and New Jersey (by this writer) yields no evidence in support of this bloc vote thesis.

(2) *Nostalgia.* It is supposed that Carter appeals to the ideals of an earlier time, and his agrarian background no doubt functions in this way to some extent. But this is by no means characteristic of Carter's self-consciousness. He makes little appeal in his speeches to the greatness of America's past, but is remarkably forward looking. His orientation to the future may be due in part to Carter's "New South"

background; he is part of a political trend which does not look back at the past, which is seen as corrupt and oppressive, but looks forward to a new day of individual freedom. The keynote of Carter's speeches is not nostalgia but hope. The subtitle to his autobiography is "Why One Man Is Optimistic About America's Third Century." For one of the epigraphs (along with Reinhold Niebuhr and Dylan Thomas) he chose lines from a Bob Dylan song about "a funny ol' world that's a-comin' along.... It looks like it's a-dyin' an' it's hardly been born."

(3) *Anti-establishment feeling.*

This view connects Carter with Ronald Reagan and ignores the religious elements. Carter is seen as chiefly anti-Washington and anti-institutional. This has an element of truth in it, particularly if we see the anti-institution element as part of the new social religion Luckmann describes. Nevertheless, this model is inadequate because it cannot comprehend the very positive and optimistic nature of Carter's campaign. He is not consistently negative, as Reagan is. Further, Carter's attacks on Washington have not been attacks on the existence of institutional power, but on the failure of the institutional leaders to exercise their power in a religious manner. Ford is accused of providing no moral and spiritual leadership. The problem with the establishment is not just its establishment-ness but its failure, as we have noted, to symbolize the ideals of its supporters.

(4) *A new rise of civil religion.*

This is the view which will concern us most in this essay. It sees Carter as a threat precisely because it sees the campaign operating on a religious level. Critics with this view, very common among the students at Princeton Seminary, also

see civil religion as a great evil, something reminiscent of the "Dark Ages" or Nazi Germany.

Understandings of the civil religion tend to be tied to understandings of the sacred and the secular. Those who buy the thesis of simple secularization are those who draw a strict distinction between the secular and the religious. For them the sacred = traditional religious symbols, and the profane = everything else. When anything "profane" begins to function as symbolic, they scream "Idolatry!" It is these persons who are most skeptical of civil religion and who tend to equate it with the absolutization of the state in Nazi Germany and in Communist countries. Those who are most suspicious and who scream the loudest are those who have bought most completely into either the traditional religious ideology or the market ideology of secular liberalism. Both groups believe their ideology to be the ideology of the society, not to be confused with the competing ideology. This explains the skepticism of Carter's use of religion on the part of Princeton Seminary students and old-line liberals. Both ideologies depend upon a clear distinction between the secular and the religious, and those who have become the religious experts of either traditional religion or secularism are threatened by Carter's fusion of religious and secular elements.

On the other hand, there are those who have a more holistic (we might even say a more Hebraic) understanding of society, and who have a broader view of the function of the religious. This group includes not only the sophisticated (anthropologists, sociologists, literary critics, Jungians, etc.) but also the "naive." I use the latter term as Luckmann does, not perjoratively. The naive believe that the nation should obey God

THE GRAVE

by Jonathan T. Carlisle

Deeper
 Deeper
 I pitch the chopper
 into the grave.
 "When will she be better?"
 my little girl asks
 innocently
 without humor
 expecting
 a reply
 within her own time span.
 "She got hit too hard;
 she won't get better."
 Going through roots
 as the rain slowly
 soaks through
 to my T-shirt.
 "Why won't she get better?"
 persistent, isn't she?
 the little girl
 who had to see
 the fluffy kitten lifeless
 without innards
 out.
 who wondered
 with frustration
 at the lack of motion.
 She'd held warm kittens
 before.
 More dirt
 to be tossed up
 to clear the path.
 Deeper
 Deeper to bury
 my own disbelief
 at this fallen feline.
 I, too, wonder.
 Another root,
 and I guess
 it's deep enough
 to hide
 what my child
 couldn't see.

and are glad to see someone bringing traditional religious values into secular government. These two very different groups have this in common because both are dependent upon symbols and allow them to function as symbols in the deeper levels of the collective consciousness or the "collective unconscious." Those who split the religious and the secular tend to intellectualize symbols and thus see different symbols as logically inconsistent. But for the naive these symbols are simply real and operative, and for the sophisticated they operate dialectically to produce a synthesis. It seems that most Americans still see things whole. They are naive and do not differentiate strictly between the religious and the secular: "what's right is right," they say," and Jimmy Carter is right. Carter himself seems to see things whole, although he makes the necessary qualifications about separation of church and state (which come naturally to a Baptist). Although he was at first reluctant to talk about his individual faith, he is now quite open and seems to recognize its symbolic value. Carter understands, nevertheless, those who do not see things whole, because it was only in 1967 after his defeat in the gubernatorial race that he was "born again." That rebirth meant the bringing of religious symbols to the center of Carter's secular life and he has not attempted to compartmentalize his consciousness since.

Bellah's sympathetic approach to civil religion in *The Broken Covenant* is more holistic, showing the importance of religious symbols in the national life. The Carter campaign is not, however, based on Bellah's book or on his understanding of civil religion. Carter's use of civil religion must be qualified carefully. First, Carter is not conscious of ap

pealing to a "civil religion;" he sees himself appealing to "the best in our people," to their ideals. He would deny that he is confusing Christianity with Americanism. Second, Carter is not resurrecting communal symbols from American myths of origin, as Bellah advises. Carter uses only the individualistic terms from traditional religion, because he is appealing to a modern religious consciousness based in the new social religion rather than in the traditional communal religion. He quotes Kierkegaard in his autobiography: "Every man is an exception" (p. 10), and Kierkegaard is not a bad place to start in looking for the sources of individualistic Christianity. Carter's emphases on rebirth, on love "for the person who happens to be standing in front of you at any given moment" (p. 132), and on personal trust in Jimmy Carter are far from the Hebraic emphases on the covenant and the wilderness experience to which Bellah points.

Moltmann's critique of civil religion in his essay on "The Cross and Civil Religion" is much more careful than most. He sees the theology of the cross as liberating us from any idolatry, including state religion. God is the God of hope rather than the god of tangible realities such as the idols of civil religion. "Christians today," he argues (p. 40), "should take the lead in secularizing, relativizing and democratizing politics if they want to be consistent." There are several factors regarding Carter which need to be taken into account before applying this critique to his campaign. First, the naive do not need to be consistent, as we have noted; Moltman demonstrates the intellectualizing and categorizing tendencies of a theologian. Second, Carter probably does see himself as relativizing politics by setting

up religious ideals (those represented by the cross) as absolutes. Third, Carter's orientation toward the future depends upon a God of hope rather than on a tangible god of the present. Fourth, Carter probably sees that the demythologizing of the idolatrous form of American civil religion has already been done for him by Nixon and the Vietnam War. Carter sees the present moment, as does Bellah, as a time for a new synthesis, a new centering on religious symbols and ideals. Moltmann and the critics of civil religion are not likely to see it, but Carter is in fact carrying out aspects of their program by adapting a Christian form of civil religion to the invisible religion of individual autonomy.

Jimmy Carter understands the complexity of his sacral role. The question at this point in the campaign is whether Carter can remain true to his understanding of that role or will mouth partisan rhetoric. He must himself symbolize the autonomous individual while at the same time symbolizing the hopes characteristic of the new social religion. He writes in the autobiography, "Some of our shared dreams are easy to state, if not always so easy to achieve.... Some of our dreams are more subtle, more difficult to put into words" (p. 10). Nevertheless, Carter is willing to make a clear affirmation because he understands the centrality of the sacral role. He quotes the Bible:

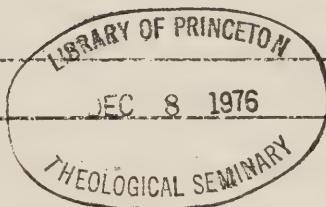
"If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"... I know from experience that uncertainty is also a devastating affliction in private life and in government. There is no clear vision of what is to be accomplished,

everyone struggles for temporary advantage. (p. 149)

His central affirmation is that (p. 11) "Our government can express the highest common ideals of human beings." It can, he believes, symbolize the religious aspirations of autonomous individuals. Jimmy Carter believes he can symbolize them in his own person.

viewpoint

Number Two November Five



SCHULLERISM AND CHURCH GROWTH

(Robert Schuller, a television preacher and a best-selling author, is a graduate of Hope College and Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan. He is pastor of the Garden Grove Community Church in California, which, though apparently not in its title, is affiliated with the Reformed Church in America.)

In the following article, Neal Plantinga, whose smile is nearly as winsome as that of Dr. Schuller, examines the church growth phenomenon, particularly through the person and work of Dr. Schuller. Plantinga is an ordained minister in the Christian Reformed Church, and he is currently working toward his Ph.D. in theology here at the seminary.

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by Cornelius Plantinga

A large number of American Protestant ministers have some reason to believe that the institutional church might be dying. To any of these unhopeful souls the conclusion in his own case may be unavoidable: he is presiding over the slow demise of a Christian congregation. He stands there in the prow of his sinking vessel on Sunday mornings and discovers that everybody but a few faithful old veterans has abandoned ship. All of life's real excitement and interest seems to be

elsewhere--on the ski slopes, at the beach, even, nowadays, in the shopping centers. And the minister, who may remember happier days, is filled with dreariness and self-pity. He may begin to dwindle with his congregation and complain of depression and identity crisis. He may go on semipermanent retreat. It seems to him that, of all the righteous, he alone is left.

Meanwhile, all those absent Presbyterians and Episcopalians and Baptists (so called only because, as someone once remarked, when they stay away from church they stay away from Presbyterian or Episcopalian or Baptist churches, respectively) are avoiding what they find to be a dismal and vacant Sunday morning religious exercise. Why should they give up golf or gardening to sing dull hymns with words like "Ebenezer"? Why listen to some self-consciously "relevant" preacher lacerate them again for being white, middle class, affluent, and uninvolved? Or why, in the more conservative churches, sit still for another yawn-filled theological lecture on matters in which they are outstandingly uninterested? No reason at all, they think. So, even though most of them claim to be believers, they stay away. Gladly, habitually, massively, more than half the American populace stays away from church on Sunday mornings and gardens, golfs, travels, skis, shops, picnics, or putters around the house instead.

So it mostly goes across the country.

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Editor: Douglas Brouwer

In the old red brick church downtown, in the little white church in the vale, even in contemporary suburban sanctuaries of glass and stone, dispirited preachers hold forth to half a crowd--except at Garden Grove Community Church near Anaheim, California. There, on the lavish 22-acre campus of the country's first walk-in, drive-in church, the Reverend Dr. Robert H. Schuller smiles fetchingly over an auditorium packed with worshipers and, moreover, a spacious parking lot crammed with drive-in worshipers. The 1,700-seat sanctuary (a bigger one is now being planned) and 1,000-car parking lot are filled twice each Sunday morning. Somehow Schuller has managed to bestir the Sunday paper and pajama crowd, draw them to church, and, with the same stroke, to gladden the ministerial heart.

In a recent book, Your Church Has Real Possibilities, Schuller shows that such success is no accident. Behind it lies an empathetic understanding of the ministerial fear of failure and a shrewd grasp of what contemporary, secularized Americans will buy in the way of religion. Thus, to disconsolate clergy, Schuller promises that, following his recipe, each of them may become the "founder and leader of...a great new inspirational center", that they are about to turn a corner "from discouragement and near defeat to optimism and unexpected victories, from one level of success to another..."

As to what non-churched people are looking for in religion these days, Schuller suggests that we think of our churches as supermarkets for Jesus Christ: "Much as it may offend many leaders in the Christian church, the truth remains that the parish church is in the business of 'retailing religion.' We define retailing as 'bringing the goods and services to the customer.'" Following is an inventory of the religious goods that churches ought to stock and a list of the "seven principles of successful retailing" that

ought to be adhered to in order for churches to sell those goods. Along these lines, Schuller sees "a fantastic future for the institutional church in the United States of America."

Here, then, is a self-acknowledged authority on Calvin's theology who by his eight books, numerous cassette tapes, influential "Institute for Successful Church Management" (whose teaching is sometimes represented in the books and on the tapes), burgeoning "Hour of Power" TV program, and remarkable success-story told and criticized in various religious journals has become a major American religious figure. He obviously knows how, wonderfully and impressively, to grow a church. Not only our mission boards, but all of us are interested in that. Can we follow his formula? May we? Is it biblical and Reformed?

Though the Schuller formula for successful church management and guaranteed church growth is detailed, including advice on such things as fund raising ("Remember that you will spoil the money tree if you go after small pickings, such as suppers, sales, and second offerings"), publicity (make sure every household in a 10-mile radius understands that you are "in business" and "have something they need"), and how to make an impression on unbelievers ("Sincerity impresses!" "Success impresses!"), the heart of it is "possibility thinking," whose close affinities to Norman Vincent Peale's "positive thinking" are at once evident. Possibility thinking, the driving energy of the whole Garden Grove enterprise, means the dreaming of great dreams and the answering of three questions about each: "Would it be a great thing for God?" "Would it help people who are hurting?" "Is anyone else doing the job?" Two Yes answers and one No means GO!

Possibility thinking appears not only in the imagining of a shining future for the institutional church

and success for its pastors; it is also the heart of what must be preached to the parishioners, in the Schuller scheme. Naturally, if the attending individuals buy it, they and the institution successfully grow together. Thus, in You Can Become the Person You Want to Be, Schuller cautions preachers against telling people that they are sinners: "They'll believe you--and you'll reinforce this self-image." Instead, sermons are to be positive, noncontroversial, colorfully illustrated. They must aim at "inspiration, entertainment; and basic commitment to Jesus Christ." People are to be told, in various ways, to stand tall! Think tall! Be tall! Or, buck up! Cheer up! Chin up! For suburbanites who look to religion (any religion) to cut them down from their hang-ups, bring peace to their jangling nerves, brighten the tattletale gray in their faces, and lightly entertain them while awarding them mastery over their own lives, this is a winning formula.

Yet several disturbing questions come to mind at once: may Christian fishers of men bait the hook with anything that will attract a bite? May we promise people what they think would help them and other hurting people? Would that be "a great thing for God"? Suppose people, in this age of unbelief, want not sermons but snappy little pep talks; not creeds but jingles; not appearances by missionaries, but ones by celebrities; not repentance and sacrifice, but gimmicks and giveaways. Suppose we can attract people by offering what they want. May we? Would that be right?

Again, suppose by this or any other method we can get our churches to grow. May we aim deliberately and primarily at growth? Or is successful growth, when it comes, God's gracious blessing on obedience--which is what we should really be aiming at?

Once more, suppose the dynamic, irrepressible efforts of Robert Schuller have been crowned with remarkable

prosperity. Leaving to the side the question whether other ministers in the Reformed tradition may achieve growth with the same methods, can they? Schuller is himself one of the important, magnetic personalities with which he likes to attract unbelievers. But what if a minister is only average looking? What if he is not a dynamo bursting with fire--em-up razzle-dazzle and get-up-and-go, but is rather an ordinary and subdued person? Suppose he lacks flash and charisma and is no entrepreneur. What if he only wants, humbly and prayerfully, to preach the gospel? This may be a recipe for failure by American success standards. But do we have to succeed by those standards? Is it not conceivable that even when some of God's servants are being good and faithful their churches might still dwindle?

Schullerism is a gospel of success by possibility thinking. Virtually everything in the church, on this view, subserves success. Ministers, the chief religion retailers in the church, are assured by Schuller that "God wants you and your church to enjoy success." They are moreover urged to try for this success by using tested principles from other areas of retail selling; namely, accessibility (nearness to major traffic arteries), surplus parking, full inventory (a good stock of church programs), service (with a competent group of clergy and trained laypersons to staff the service department), visibility, and good cash flow.

Though it is perhaps not quite fair to suggest, as some have waggishly done, that Schuller's three marks of the true church are accessibility, surplus parking, and appeal to unbelievers; still it is quite true that, in his program, nearly all the church's energy, its preaching, its money, its theology of gospel, of itself, of mission--nearly all of this is aimed at the achievement of growth. Schuller frankly asserts that Calvin's definition of the church ("a place where the word is

proclaimed, sacraments administered, and discipline maintained") is somewhat "reactionary" and sadly deficient in not including "the most important aspect of the church--which is 'a group of joyful Christians happily sharing their glorious faith with the despairing souls of their fellowmen who have never known the joy of Christ!'" This "most important aspect" of the church is, in fact, not merely added to the other three in Schuller's scheme. It is virtually substituted for them. The church is mission--in a most commercial and American sense.

Now, surely, we ought to do missions. Being part of God's great plan to rescue His erring children is not only exciting and edifying, but also explicitly commanded by Christ. We have often done too precious little of it. But what about the rest of the church's task? What about, for example, the obedient proclaiming and making visible of the Lordship of Christ in every area of life? That would be "a great thing for God." Surely that would "help hurting people." Certainly it is not being done nearly well enough by others. The prophetic voice of the Church speaking strongly, by the Spirit of God, to the society in which it finds itself is choked off in Schullerism. And even overlooking that crucial omission, the question for the church's legitimate evangelistic outreach remains: may we achieve growth at just any price? Specifically, may we grow if we have to do it in the way proposed by Your Church Has Real Possibilities?

Possibly we can grow by faithful preaching, evangelism, administration of sacraments, and even good discipline. Almost certainly we can grow if we are willing to do anything to get growth. Our vacation Bible schools are already half-amusing borderline cases in this respect--populated by kids seeking treats and patronized by mothers seeking baby-sitting. No doubt our churches would fill with

hitherto unbelieving adults if we gave green stamps for church attendance, or introduced bingo at the second service, or offered a free car wash to every twelfth worshiper. If kids got baubles and their parents trinkets, we would grow. If magicians entertained and celebrities regularly spoke, we would grow. If Mark Spitz directed the program at our newly attached swimming pools, we would grow. If, in general, we convincingly preached a gospel that promised our hearers that Christianity could be neatly used for the ultimate purpose of creating happy, prosperous lives for ourselves, almost surely we would grow. But for anyone who cares about preserving the integrity of the Reformed faith, the answer to the question whether we may grow if we have to do it this way is obvious: we may not.

Schuller has a number of intriguing suggestions for church growth. His analysis of the minister's discouragement is perceptive, his money and business sense seems acute, his grasp of what secular America wants religion to do for it is strong, and his personality, dominating all of it, is winsome. Moreover, at least for such dynamic, entrepreneur types as Schuller, it all works handsomely, with lively, gratifying, bustling success. His program, in other words, has every advantage except that of being clearly biblical and Reformed. As Martin Marty has said, "If Calvin were alive, he'd be spinning in his grave."

Yet success is no guarantee of our obedience to God. The Mahara Ji, that plump little teen-aged guru from India, has been disconcertingly successful in recent years. So has the Korean Moon. So has His Divine Eminence, Father-in-God, Frederick J. Eikerenketter III (better known as Rev. Ike), the apostle of green power. People whose methods are crass and whose goals unchristian are often distressingly successful. Yet, whatever

ME, WONDERIN', 'BOUT YOU

we chatter
we speak in tidbits
we run in
but not out of the way
the question we want
to ask
to hear
hides behind our silly chatter
or is it silly
but yet serious

we sit apart
but sitting together
we look and see
I you
you me
we cross
we dart
oh how funny
we fear
what we want

you speak to him
I to her
you glance at him
I at her
you laugh
you smile
I cry
I wonder
I do as you
you feel as me

I, the man
the aggressor
the initiator
You, the woman
the aggressed
the tearful waiter
I fret
you may say no
you fret
I may never ask

(continued)

how
do I know
how
do you know
we don't
lest we risk
make that leap
we're scared
our joy
it may be shattered

I love you

--Linn "Rus" Howard

their claims, they may not necessarily be faithful to the Scriptures. So it cannot be said that people less successful than Schuller may not, therefore, examine his program for good or ill.

The fact is that Schuller's program has some features we can well use. Accessibility? Supplus parking? Why not? The multistaff approach to ministry? Very sound. Sunday school during the worship services? Probably, all things considered, better than before or after. Visibility, imaginative publicity, wise, serpentine financial management? All fine. A thorough program of education for the newly churchd? Excellent! This, especially, deserves high praise and close study. An orientation in architecture, music, preaching as well to the mind of the secularity as to that of the believer? Essential, where done with integrity! Similarly, Schuller's overall analysis of our sometimes invincible dullness and our almost deliberate resistance to honest growth is acute and ought to be attended to.

But his general program, interesting and tempting as it is, must be, if reluctantly, still decisively rejected. Possibility thinking, despite Schuller's claim, is not the same thing as faith. Faith includes trust in God even when we have no sign that Christ

is "speaking, smiling, loving, and laughing, and uplifting the hearts of listeners," but summoning us instead to walk with Him out into the darkness, or into the mockery of those who hate, or across the valley of the shadow of death. Faith must be exercised even when there is no clear success for us anywhere in sight. One gets the uneasy impression that most of what Schullerism recommends to be preached is an answer to the questions "What's in it for me?" and "What good will religion do me?" This forgets that the chief end of man is not to be happy, merely, and that the chief end of religion is not to equip us to achieve our personal goals. We are intended to please God--not the other way around--and the idea that Christianity is something we adopt for what it will pay us in happiness and personal mastery is an idea that must be explicitly discouraged.

Unhappily, such ideas are not at all discouraged in Schullerism. What is mainly lacking in the Schuller theology of church growth is the whole matter of grace. Growth, success, and personal happiness come, when they do, not because we bargain with God for them, but because God is infinitely gracious. The point is that we must not make our central aim one of success in the way of crowded churches, big budgets, and impressive facilities--nor even in the way of personally healed hurts, freed hang-ups, and dissolved neuroses. These things may come, and by the grace of God they sometimes do accompany faithfulness to Him, but they ought to come by the way, incidentally. To aim deliberately at winning them is to lapse into the sort of cash-and-carry religion which our Lord came to supersede.

The fact is that what we might think of as success often results from faithfulness to God--but not always. Whether it does or not is up to God; it is not something we engineer. There is no promise in the gospel that

we may not have to live, even as Christians, with some neuroses and unhappiness. There is no promise that the church may not have to suffer the indifference of secularists. John the Baptist, for all his faithfulness, earned the privilege of sitting in a damp prison alcove until he was butchered. Jesus Himself found that He did not succeed splendidly in at least one town because the people there were unbelieving. The easy yoke we are offered by our Lord is not to remove our burdens and set us to smiling, but rather to make our burden bearable. What we are promised in the gospel is not certain personal success or a place in the winner's circle, but, in any event, the gracious presence of God.

Even when, in His goodness, God rewards obedience in our personal lives with happiness, and faithfulness in our preaching and evangelism with converts, it is not because He is delivering what we contracted for. The important thing is that we worship Him because He is God and serve Him gratefully because, in Christ, He has redeemed us. It is, otherwise, just as if a young married couple should be kind to aging parents not out of love and gratitude, but only because they hope for occasional gifts of money. The money may come, but the relationship has been badly distorted. Similarly, when personally or ecclesiastically the blessings of God are sought for themselves--with God making Himself useful by delivering them--the relationship is adulterated and grace is pre-empted.

Here Schuller's success gospel seems gracelessly twisted. It is all backward, confusing God's gifts with our chief end--which is to glorify and serve Him. This distortion pulls much of the rest of the theological structure out of shape as well. Preaching is trivialized. Proclamation is referred to as "preachments" or "pronouncements." Yet proclamation must be done regardless

of whether unbelievers (or believers, for that matter) always find it attractive. To rid preaching in advance of any controversy is to emasculate it. To confine it to cheerful and chummy directions for self-help is to reduce it shamefully. To remove from it all the dark, frightening side of the gospel is to make it superficial. Surely that enormous cross atop the Garden Grove Church is more than a 90-foot irony!

Finally, Schuller's theology of the church is frankly un-Reformed. The church is not simply a mission trying to make an inspiring impression on unbelievers. However difficult or lonely or troublesome, the church's task in teaching all nations to observe whatever Christ has commanded must be faithfully undertaken even when people misunderstand, or are angered, or are uninterested. Nor, to attract such people are we obliged to scuttle our denomination and wing it on our own as "community" churches. Schuller's proposal, moreover, that the pastor, as tycoon-leader, use Robert's Rules of Order to shut up "negative thinkers" is absurd. Whatever happened to the priesthood of all believers?

No doubt, even without Schuller's personal charisma, some of our churches could grow, or grow faster, if we were willing to offer whatever people want religion to do for them. We could use celebrities, giveaways, and barely concealed promises of personal wealth and happiness to entice people. We could combine a liberal avoidance of talk about sin, repentance, and obedience with a fundamentalist avoidance of talk about controversial social issues. We could give ourselves into the embrace of American culture. But, at that price, we must not grow. We had better wait for God to bless real obedience, incidentally, with whatever success He chooses. It may come in our lifetime. It may not.

WRECK

A wreck is a kind of judgment,
a gavel falling on your front end,
a jury shouting at your fender.

You understand the charge, don't you?
The charge is the crash of metal,
the bent frame, the warp.
The bailiff speaks steel:
the court cares nothing but concrete:
the sentence is hard:
the charge is the warp and the judgment.

The law is clean where there is no flesh.
It is simple for us who die only in memory,
thinking what if the country of blood had claimed you
what if the softness had spilt.
It seems there are parts of this vehicle so fragile that
if a bird alights he should be held without bond.

There is no metal in the word but flesh.
The jury speaks softly where life collides
for they ride with us;
they feel even a bird, a feather on the raw surface,
they smell blood at the distance of conjecture.
The judge comes sure
but he rides with us,
the first through the windshield,
the first to hold my hand.

There is a wheel within my wheel,
a fire within this cylinder.
I am a wreck and still moving,
I hear the charge and the judgment,
I know the flesh and the word:
he rides, he wrecks.
I am a wreck and still moving,
I am a wreck and he rides with us.

--Stephen Holloway

NOTES ON AN ELECTION

(Robert Andrews, a graduate of Hobart College and a second-year student in the M.Div. program, is an member of the Social Action Committee at Princeton Seminary. The following article represents his own opinion about the election--and the notion of future as history.)

by Robert Andrews

The New York Times has just given editorial endorsement to Carter. The New York Daily News casts its support to Ford. The debates have been completed. And the final days of the presidential campaign are here. During this last week, the Carter camp presses to secure its uncomfortable lead over Ford, while Ford hopes that on election day the undecided voters will enter the voting booths saying, "I prefer mediocrity rather than the risk of a change in office." This election hinges on the moods and whims of these undecided voters.

As you read this, however, you already know which candidate benefited from the moods and whims of this great undecided vote. You can name our President of the United States; most of you spent Tuesday night watching John Chancellor or Walter Cronkite. But that which you know to have already happened remains to me unknown. Your history is my future. I only hope that your history serves you better and kindlier than my fears for the future serve me. For I fear that this election closely resembles a farce by Henry Fielding: it's filled with mistaken identities, arrogant deceit, and licentious ambitions. Rev. Thwackum is a Democrat and Mr. Western is a Republican ("it is often the same person who represents the villain and the hero").

Following the Foreign Policy and Defense debate, such was the story: correspondents and journalists alike tallied the points and decided upon a winner. The political punches and

blunders were calculated and initialed in the judges' scorecards. But did these judges adequately reckon who won and who lost? I think not. Rather than measuring the candidates' ability to command an issue, they ranked the two men according to who had the most effective showmanship. Perhaps, however, the candidates' individual showmanship is the only thing that distinguishes them from each other. Perhaps showmanship is the only valid criteria for judging between our two presidential candidates, since Ford and Carter do not fundamentally disagree.

I hope to be proved wrong. I hope that there are valid reasons for the election of our President. I hope that we voters are more than just a gullible audience enjoying theatrical talents and farcical situations.

If Carter is elected (as I think he will be), I hope to be proved wrong that he is as much of a warmonger as Ford. I hope to be shown that he is willing, unlike Ford, to place the needs of the world populace before the manufacture of armaments. I desire that my perception of Carter as an expedient, amoral rascal be disproved. I hope that your history testifies to a difference between these men, because my present testifies to their kindred natures.

But if my fears prove true, or if Ford is reelected, our nation faces its direst moment. A call for social, political, and spiritual rebellion must resound loudly. Our world, let alone our nation, cannot afford to suffer policies that encourage military and economic superiority, that sponsor U.S. authority, and that negotiate from threat and not from humility.

You already know a bit of the future. May my expectations be dashed by your history.

LIGHT SHED BY LIGHTER READING

(Judith Beach Nichols is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College. She is an able writer who has intermittently contributed to a variety of publications. Her husband is a seminary administrator.)

by Judith Beach Nichols

Are you (secretly) ashamed to curl up/stretch out with a mystery story or a novel when all those tremendous books on your course lists are just crying out to be read? If the devil makes you do it, consider a few titles or authors who will entertain and engross you, and--if you're the reflective person I'm sure you are--enlighten you considerably along the way. This feature (for maybe I'll repeat it) will be random, idiosyncratic, partial--but then, aren't all reading lists?

For the mystery buff--or for any-one--two suggestions: Harry Kemelman's "Rabbi" series, and the fine works of Celia Fremlin, both available in paperback, and at the public library.

Have you met the Rabbi, David Small, and his wife Miriam, the rebbitzin? (Friday the Rabbi Slept Late, Saturday the Rabbi...etc., through Wednesday already, and more to come, we do pray.) When you do, you will learn much about Judaism and the Torah; the differences and similarities between rabbinical and ministerial functions; congregational life, so much the same for all; the WASP mindset; family life of all clergy; suburbs, universities, Israel, building campaigns, petty congregational rivalries and splits, human risibility, cussedness and grandeur. Also enjoy marvelous writing; dialogue so real, so funny, so sad; first-class plot construction. Enjoy these books in health, and learn.

Celia Fremlin--oh brother, oh sister! Not so well known (she's British, for one thing) and that's our loss. Plunge in, if you can find her books (among others, The Trouble Makers, Possession, The Jealous One).

Men: do not be put off because she writes from a woman's point of view. Women: do not be put off because she may seem at first to be presenting her characters in a "pre-lib" way. Believe me, there is rich gold to be mined here, apart from the superbly acute writing and the plots that may surprise. Enjoy the mystery, and meanwhile (or afterwards) ponder. Men, ponder: "Do women's minds really work like that?" (Answer--frequently.) Then--"Why?" Good question. You might learn a lot about your future parishioners (or your wife). Women, ponder: "Honestly, are women that way?" (Answer--well, her men often are, wouldn't you agree?) "Do I feel she is putting down women?" Good question. I'd say, by no means; her realism is deadly, explicable, cautionary, and extremely compassionate (I have seldom read more moving pages on the torpor of a young mother who never gets a night's sleep than in The Hours Before Dawn, for instance). These books are psychological gems. They'll entertain you, maybe annoy; but they cast light on the way things often are in personal relations (though maybe that isn't the way they should be).

How would you like reading lists of more mysteries?--novels, major and minor, about clergy and/or their wives?--memoirs or biographies of clergy or demiclergy?--other? I have some in mind, all easy to read and very illuminating!

RIDING ON SWIFT STEEDS

(Ellen Gooding is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a second-year student in the M.Div. program. The following sermon was delivered in Miller Chapel on October 5.)

by Ellen Gooding

Texts: Isaiah 30:15-18
Luke 17:20-21

"In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength..." I wonder how often we really let God speak to us in the silence of our souls. Here at seminary too often we get caught up in what we are doing--in field education, in academia and in what we are becoming as the future ministerial paradigms of success. In effect, we tune out the very essence of ourselves--that divine humanity present in us all which calls us to listen, respond and sensitively care about each other as creations of God.

I find myself so busy trying to figure out what courses I'm taking, where I'm going, how I'm going to get there, that I lose sight of who it is that's going there--that is me. I allow myself to be pressured, to be put into a box to be institutionalized, compartmentalized and categorized by what I am striving to "become"--as a future minister. As a result, I lose touch with who I am now as a disciple of Christ and of what that means in my relationships with others. Isaiah describes this dilemma of self-identity so well. For even though the Lord provides the strength we need "in quietness and in trust", too often we just do not listen. Instead, "we speed upon horses"--of self-imposed academic, social and peer pressure. "We ride upon swift steeds" of

selfish vanity and personal pride, while vainly attempting to measure our self-worth by the apparent "success" of our ministries.

And sometimes I fear I am more guilty of participating in this race toward success than anyone else. It is such a temptation for me to be constantly worrying about the next assignment, the next field education position, the next sermon, the next world, that I don't fully live and be in the present moment. I don't listen to God speaking to me now in the very midst of my becoming. I lose Him in the shuffle of my own searching and scattered thoughts and let the future rule my life. I allow my sense of "becoming" to dominate my "being."

Not only do I continue to have this struggle within myself; it is also true in my relationships with others. How often do we all worry and fret about where a certain personal relationship with another of us is going, about what it's going to "become"? We analyze and speculate--are we friends, or more than friends, or less than friends, or enemies, or just tolerant of each other's company? It is so seldom that we allow ourselves to let go of that "becoming" in the relationship and simply appreciate the "being" of that relationship for what it is. How often do we stop long enough in our theorizing, apologizing, and evangelizing with or against one another, to truly listen to God speaking to us through others? Too often we don't realize the beauty of each other's uniqueness, and of what that can offer to us here and now, if we are only open to it. And perhaps in hearing God speak to us through each other, we can begin to get in touch with our own uniqueness. Then we are able to listen to God speaking to us in ourselves, in the depths of our own floundering, frustrated souls.

I was a chaplain intern this summer in a general hospital, and was busy making the rounds of my departments one night visiting with patients. I was in one room talking with a patient

about her recent diagnosis of cancer. She was really an inspiration to me because of her intense faith in God and the effect it had upon her life. It provided her with the strength she needed to face the stark reality of her illness. As was so often the case, I found myself being ministered to far more than I ministered. But while I was sitting there, I heard these horrifying moans coming from someone across the hall. They weren't small sighs of suffering either--they were profound and piercing expressions of terrible pain that I couldn't get out of my mind.

After saying good-bye to my patient friend, I went out on down the hall and passed the room where the moans were coming from. There was a nurse in the room, apparently taking care of the patient. The door was ajar, and I could tell by the nurse's gestures that she'd had a rough day. It was about the end of her shift and her nerves seemed at their breaking point because I heard her reprimand the patient telling him to be quiet. Well, I thought, I could go in and just hold his hand, but the nurse is in there, and she knows what to do, she'll take care of him. I continued down the hall, still hearing the tired sighs of exasperation from the nurse and the increasingly piercing moans from the patient. Something kept gnawing at me--"go back and just talk to him"; but I fought off the temptation--after all, how could I help him, especially if the nurse couldn't? I got to the end of the hall and all the way down the elevator, and just couldn't stand myself any longer. Starting back to the room, I passed the nurse's station to see if he had some relatives nearby that might want someone to talk to. The nurse turned to me--"Mr. Adams? No, no immediate family--he just died..."

I will not easily forget the overwhelming despair and remorse I felt then, not for the patient's

welfare--for that is only in God's hands--but for my own failure to listen to God speaking to me in my soul. I was so caught up in my own fears and insecurities, my own need to "become" a "good" chaplain that I forgot to "be" a human being, and more

EXCERPTS FROM A CHURCH BULLETIN

(The following is dedicated to the guys in Alexander Hall.)

This afternoon there will be meetings in the south and north ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends.

Tuesday at 4:00 there will be an icecream social. All ladies giving milk please come early.

Wednesday the Ladies' Literary Society will meet. Mrs. Johnson will sing "Put me in my Little Bed" accompanied by the pastor.

Thursday at 5:00 there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers' Club. All wishing to become Little Mothers please meet the minister in his study.

This being Easter Sunday we will ask Mr. Johnson to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.

The service will close with "Little Drops of Water." One of the ladies will quietly start and the rest of the congregation will join in.

On Sunday a special collection will be taken to defray the expenses of a new carpet. All those wishing to do something on the carpet please come forward and get a piece of paper.

importantly a disciple of Christ. I was afraid to respond to those moans, because I was afraid to listen to God speaking to me through another's suffering. I guess I just couldn't face the reality that that patient's suffering was my suffering, his humanity was my humanity, his moans were my moans too.

And isn't that what the essence of Christian discipleship is? For just as Christ came to suffer for us and rose in his resurrection to bring us new life, so we as his disciples are freely called to enter into each other's suffering, not with the despair of hopelessness, but with the vision of new and eternal life. How often do we really internalize each other's suffering and respond to each other's needs now? How often do we acknowledge our discipleship to Christ by remembering that redemption, salvation, new life in Christ arose out of suffering?

How many of us here make the same mistake I did this summer? How many of us sell ourselves out to our own need to "become" something, to "prove" ourselves as effective ministers that we cease to "be", we cease to respond humanly to the needs of each other? How many of us are pastoral in our approach, but callous in our caring? And that is not to say that we should try to be Gods ourselves, and attempt to completely eradicate suffering. But I think we forget sometimes that we can hear God speak to us in the midst of each other's suffering as well as our own, just as God spoke to us ultimately in the suffering of His only Son. How often do we hear the moans of our fellow seminary students here and now, and more importantly, how often do we listen? Are we going to continue to strive to "become" and forget that what we become is only a result of what we are--now in this very moment.

Christ says, according to Luke-- "the Kingdom of God is not to be observed...for behold, the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you". Do we see God and His Kingdom enough in our personal lives, in the moans of ourselves and the moans of each other?

Poets in this issue:

Linn "Rus" Howard is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is a first year student in the M.Div. program.

Stephen Hollaway is a Southern Baptist and may be considered a contributing editor of Viewpoint.

In the last issue the only poet was Jonathan T. Carlisle ("The Grave"). He is a graduate of Colgate University and is a third-year M.Div. student.

THE MYSTIC VISION

("The Mystic Vision," delivered in Miller Chapel on October 22, is the third in a series of poetry sermons by Benjamin Williams. The sermon is written in dactyllic septameter--i.e., the stress is placed on the first of every two syllables, with seven such stresses per line. The lines are arranged in quatrains, with the second and fourth lines of each quatrain rhyming. The sermon opens with a three quatrain proposition; this is followed by the main body, exposition, or, as in this case, a description of a personal experience; and the sermon closes with a brief interpretation or exhortation.

Ben is a graduate of Stetson University and is a third-year student in the M.Div. program.)

by Benjamin Williams

Theory without mystery fulfills no task but boredom,
sends no apostolic blessing but the dusty flavor
of a private curse bestowed upon the faithful hopefuls.
People perish lest they sense the mystic favor.

Playing hide-and-seek within the temple grounds suffices
little when the heart desires the Holy Place supremely.
They whose voices rise in slogan only shall be empty
when the Son of God goes forth unto the rood unseemly.

But the weary who desire to merely touch His garment
find a healing that sustains throughout our imperfection.
Graciously the voice of One of whom we scarcely wonder
grants the awful revelation--and the resurrection.

Ancient mystics of the desert, knowing life was transient,
recommended contemplating death to prime devotion.
Unfamiliar with monastic insight, still the measure
served my rule at times. Reflection on the pilgrim soul in

passing exile from a fatherland its never entered
yet, reveals affections of our hearts to be asunder:
being made of dust, and loving chiefly dust-made beings,
yet still longing for transcendant glory in Another.

So I paused beneath the sky to pray and muse upon my
severed state, when I, mere pilgrim on the way, was greeted
by the pilgrim Spirit. Held transfixed, it seemed I mounted
without effort through still, star-pierced air. Below retreated

this tree-studded orb, until a speck amidst a speckled canvas. Homeless, worldless was I--waif within the palace--lost, alone, and feeling very small within expanses vaster than my unimpeded vision could encompass.

Time relaxed; each second, pausing, queried whence my journey. Silence reigned, the clamour settled down to restless quiet. Lightning sharp, and rolling 'cross the void like far-flung thunder drove the conquering, car-gear'd host of heaven. None defy it!

He, who rode the darkness o'er the waves and bid his boat-bound followers do the same, whose voice the mountains withers, sat enthroned upon the chariot of the night with four-fold wheels of swirling gaseous galaxies which bear him thither.

None I saw, but all I knew, while--silent and pervasive as the even mists o'er-brimming mountain crags, cascading downward tidal cataracts, a wind-song pouring through the forest rifts--so swept God's presence into all my waiting.

Then He ushered me into the universe's very limits. Shattering the form of time He delved its secrets. Everywhere I searched at once, and found God's presence with me; nowhere, at no time could I elude the sovereign Spirit.

In that Presence, my staccato machinations--true named "vulgar tongue"--fell useless, senseless half-awakened dreaming; awe before the Christos Regnant stills our awe-filled babbling. ...But, where words no longer sound, there human words find meaning.

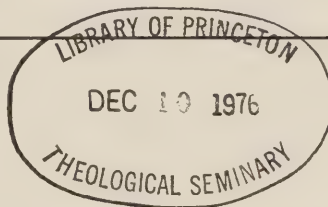
Turning from the pilgrim's shrine, though wishing I could tarry, worshipping, within the void, the Spirit caught me. Hurtle'd downward, swift horizons rose to fence me 'bout. A mortal within mortal realms, with mortal limitations girded

once again was I, unworthy, no, unfaithful servant--now, no better for my travels--but with better reasons for my service. Having touched our common Touchstone, purpose birthed imperative. Here time and time and divers seasons

summon servants to refresh their focus; eyes grow bleary from the road-way noon-day sun. When running, merely lore-led faint. With all your seeking, seek God's face; with all your gaining, gain the mystic vision kiss of God upon the forehead.

viewpoint

Number Three December Ten



WHAT IN THE WORLD DOES "A.D." MEAN?

(The following sermon is a product of the preaching practicum PRO5. Jonathan Lange is a graduate of Princeton University who left a promising executive career with the DuPont Company in Wilmington, Delaware, to enter seminary. He is currently doing his senior concentration in preaching at the seminary.)

by Jonathan T. Lange

Texts: Isaiah 45:18-25
Philippians 2:1-13

A few months ago, while waiting to pick up our VW bus from a local repair shop, I overheard three mechanics talking as they worked, about the world situation. As they covered everything from hunger to nuclear war to pollution, one of them named George said, somewhat out of the blue, "Well, that's why I never worry about the future anymore. I know what's going to happen." "Oh, yeah?" "Yeah," he said softly and seriously, "we're all going right down the tube!"

There were a few seconds of stunned silence before someone said, "Aw, c'mon George!" And business continued as usual, with the quiet clinks and "tinks" of tools on metal.

But for those few seconds, we were in the presence of the profound.

George was speaking for all of us there, and I was forced to admit to myself that I have some serious doubts about the state of things which rarely get expressed. When I honestly look at what I know about the state of this world, I have trouble not concluding that it's on an irreconcilable collision course with oblivion--one way or another. I mean it! There is a part of me which doubts that there is anything anybody can do!

Most of the time, of course, I block it out of my mind, but the result is that I tend to withdraw into my own personal life sphere and "mind my own business." In my thinking I group the possibility of world disaster with that of getting killed in an auto accident or dying of cancer. If they happen, they happen. Meanwhile, business has to continue as usual for me--as it did for George.

It's an attitude, really. And as such it isn't obvious to others or usually to myself. I still vote and try to make some changes in the world. But it shows up in little ways. For instance, I find I don't like to hear or read world news much anymore. On Sunday, I always jump first to the comics, sports and magazine sections. The front page news I somehow put off reading for days, and when I do read it I stay mentally at a safe and objective distance from it.

Now as soon as I own up to this attitude, I'm confronted by my faith. The Apostles Creed sings of God and "Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord... (who) sitteth on the

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Viewpoint, a publication of Princeton Theological Seminary, is an informal journal, a forum for frank and creative discussion. Essays, poems, short stories, sermons, and criticism are all welcome and should be submitted to the editor not later than the last week of every month. Viewpoint will be published the first week of every month. The editor, acting under the supervision of the Editorial Committee, reserves the right not to publish certain contributions. Opinions expressed in Viewpoint should not be construed as those of the administration, faculty, student body, or even the editor. The opinions expressed here, such as they are, are those of the contributors.

Editor: Douglas Brouwer

(continued from page one)

right hand of God the Father Almighty." When I consider this I have to admit that my doubts and my withdrawal from the world are denials of the dominion of that risen Lord. For if he is Lord, he's in control and I have no reason to worry. But then I'm confronted with the question: do I, or can I, really believe that Jesus Christ is Lord--Lord of all the worlds that are? Do I really know what the term Lord means and is it real to me? Frankly, it's a problem for me; and my plan this morning is to share with you my own struggles on this very question as honestly and clearly as I can, because I suspect that the same sort of problem exists for you too.

What then, in the world today, does the term "A.D." (Anno Domini: in the year of our Lord) mean anyway? Does it really mean anything to anyone anymore? Does it really mean anything to me? I have trouble conceiving of Jesus as Lord of all creation, first because I don't see any results. All humankind lives under constant threat of war. Half the world is going hungry. The "Pandora" of technology has released an autocatalytic (self-feeding) decomposition of the environment. Christ's sovereignty seems, at best, obscure and, at worst, completely ineffective.

Second, the word "Lord" itself turns me off. The whole enthronement imagery seems somehow outdated. I've been brought up to believe in democracy not monarchy: "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." I can say the words, but I'm uncomfortable with the thought of humankind kneeling in submission before any kind of "lord," even the Son of God. And, too, the image contradicts my faith in God as loving, and in Jesus as humble. So I tend to think of Jesus as Lord in a limited, personal sense rather than a cosmic one. I again withdraw into my life sphere, and I want to translate the Greek word, Kurios, as "master" (which it can mean) instead of "Lord." I think of myself as his disciple, following him as my own personal teacher and master.

But the gospel of Jesus Christ won't let me leave it at that! In Matthew, Jesus himself says: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matt.28:18).

The writer of I Peter speaks of him as the one "who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him." (I Pet. 3:22). And in Paul's letters, Christ is "head over all things" (Eph. 1:22). There can be no question that the title "Lord" for Jesus is not limited to mean "personal master." In the creeds of the church it has a special cosmic, kingship connotation, which is an essential part of the New Testament faith. So I must choose: turn my back on that Lord of all creation; or, struggle further.

And then I come to Paul's confessional hymn to the Philippians which has been just read. Here is one in prison whose ministry may end any day; the founder of the Philippian church offering what may be his last advice and which must keep them strong and straight when he is gone. What can he say? He urges them, above all, to have this hymn in their minds, in their heart-of-hearts, as the very air they breathe. The act of taking a deep breath has a therapeutic value all its own, and here, I think, Paul in a way is asking them to "inhale" the essence of that hymn. He probably didn't write the hymn himself. It was a familiar confession of faith for the early Church just as the Apostles' Creed is for us today. But he brings it alive and challenges the Philippians to make the awareness of its message concrete in their living.

It reminds me first that mine is not the only age of radical disillusionment. Paul lived with it too as did the writer of Isaiah 45 before him, who after 50 years of exile in Babylon could still proclaim, out of the tenacity of his faith, that God's deliverance was on the way:

*Turn to me and be saved, all
the ends of the earth!...To me
every knee shall bow, every
tongue shall confess.*

And I wonder about the tenacity of my faith.

But the deliverance that Paul proclaims is different from that of Second Isaiah. And as an answer to my problem, Paul's advice is confusing. Jesus Christ, according to the early Christian hymn, does not have a simple sovereignty. Yes, he is exalted and called Lord; but he is also just a man! He is a peculiar king who rejected royalty and became a servant--obedient even to the point of dying.

Paul seems to be saying that our Lord is not detached and out of reach, "up there," but that as a man he participates in world-wide human endeavors. There is no subject-object relationship, but one of mutuality. In fact, he is a servant; subserving and preserving the world rather than ruling it. He suffers and struggles and dies, with and for all humanity. And he waits: for a response from humankind; for a confession that he "is Lord."

The trouble is that Paul doesn't explain how all that works, and I can't make much logical sense out of it all. It leaves a lot of questions unanswered. Still, I somehow find that strange ruler of the hymn to be not just confusing, but appealing--even compelling! Maybe he exercises his authority and power through love not might. Maybe his dominion, by choice, is not so much over the physical world directly as it is over people's hearts. And humanity then has a renewed self-identity, because rather than usurp the displaced dominion of humankind, he restores and enhances it. Somehow all civilizations are under his care, yet free at the same time. Then maybe the "bended knee" that is expected is simply a response of love, and acceptance of responsibility in and for the world--even in the face of doom.

So I begin to see that Jesus Christ our Lord need not be the royal figure I have objected to. He is, in fact, most authentic as a rather unlikely Lord: a servant/King; a real human personality, whose power is the capability of causing a change in human behavior through a love which waits for a "Yes!" response. But unlikely or not, he is still Lord! And even if the world seems bent on self-destruction, somehow he rules and over-rules with the power of love!

I still have unanswered questions though. Jesus still seems obscure to me. He can no longer be met fact-to-face like any other person. And the effects of such an inefficient and invisible Lordship seem evident. We're not getting anywhere. The world is still a mess. So I think to myself: isn't it more reasonable to assume that our Lord will appear only at the end of the world, and take over then?

Yet Paul doesn't seem bothered by this. He seems certain that Christ rules now--in the present: "Jesus Christ is Lord," we are to confess. He has issued in a new age (the present) in which he reigns as Lord: an age, perhaps infinite in length, but one with a destiny. For Paul, the object of Christ's lordship is not the beginning or the end of the world, but the present.

Paul's certainty makes me wonder. Maybe I'm too "results" oriented, and there is another way to measure our Lord's effectiveness. Maybe the goal is not some future fulfillment, but life itself, as an unfolding process--the integration of the whole of history of humankind!

In 1936, Franklin D. Roosevelt said:

This generation of Americans has a rendez-vous with destiny.

Well, maybe the whole world is continually, even in the darkest hour, in the process of having a rendez-vous with destiny, through the Lordship of Jesus Christ!

Out of all this I begin to sense that unlikely Lord everywhere and anywhere: participating with all humankind in the agonies and ecstasies of life; but somehow (through that participating) guiding too, in a way I can't call on or see or prove for sure. But I find I want to look for him. And I look first to the struggles and tensions of human lives to find him. In the "business as usual" of George, the mechanic--isn't our Lord there? Can you tell me I didn't see him in that

Morristown, New Jersey courtroom as Joseph Quinlan pleaded for the death of his daughter, Karen?:

Take her from the machine and the tubes connected to her and let her pass into the hands of the Lord.

With the Supreme Court as it deliberates--isn't he there? A law school student observer of their proceedings recently commented:

I think something happens to people who become Supreme Court Justices. They may be ordinary, but they understand the responsibility and try to carry it.

And wasn't he there in the life of the former Secretary of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjold, when he responded?:

I don't know Who--or what--put the question, I don't know when it was put. I don't even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer "Yes" to Someone--or Something--and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life, in self-surrender, had a goal.

As I work this through, all of creation seems to me to be like a symphony (maybe with difficult harmony but still a symphony) composed by God and conducted by our Lord. Those instruments that disregard the conductor and follow their own sense of pitch and rhythm, disrupt the performance. While those who respond to him, preserve the total integrity and harmony of the music, even though it may seem discordant to their limited ears. The beauty of the symphony is in the performing of it, not in just the last chords. When it's finished, it beckons to be played again.

So I come to see that I can believe in that unlikely Lord. I find that faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, reinterpreted, makes all the difference between writing the world off and withdrawing, or affirming the reality of an unfolding destiny for humankind and participating. And for my part, I choose participat-

I choose to be of the world, "Anno Domini," and put my expectations for humankind truly in his hands. I choose to try to live as a symphonic instrument, playing in response to Jesus Christ the Lord!

The matter is far from closed, of course. I'll still go home today and head for the Sunday funnies! But, with this shift in perspective I think I can also sit down, take a deep breath, dig into the doom of the front page headlines and say, deep in my heart-of-hearts, "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!"

SYMBOL SILENCE

Breezes of early afternoons
that from silence bring into whispers
trees of red and gold;

Sunlight filtered between
tongues of green and gold, orange and
brown,
that is emitted through gaps;

Whispers, breaking a natural silence
of time and place,
Tell of things the ear cannot hear.

Symbols become understanding:

Yet as the symbol is perceived,
(this the ear can feel)
such whispers speak loud and clear.

Sounds then say
that loneliness is but mere silence
amidst the crowd,
where whispers,
untold and yet perceived,
create a message only the symbol
may transmit.

--Bruce A. Chapman

A MANUSCRIPT ATTRIBUTED TO OTTO DAFAY

(Walter Lawn, whose writing has appeared in these pages before, signed a lucrative contract with the Fund for Theological Education. He has decided, however, to play out his option and become a free agent next semester.)

by Walter Lawn

I ran across the following manuscript while studying for the CH01 mid-term examination, and despite certain problems presented by the difficult grammar and constant and often incomprehensible abbreviations, I determined to publish it.

Otto DaFay was a monk in the small town of Fay in northern Spain. He lived in the eighth and ninth centuries, and was known for his heroic fidelity to the Christian faith even under the Infidel. The manuscript attributed to him is written in a cramped, Carolingian minuscule in abominable Latin. Despite the paleographic evidence, it is most likely that the MS is quite late, because of various references to very late events, fancifully explained. The hand and the attribution to the eighth century saint probably represent an attempt to gain acceptance for the manuscript, based on a supposed early provenance. See the similar technique used in the Pseudo-Isogetical Decretals.

Incipit liber primus.

Tertiumquid, bishop of Sarasota, was consecrated in the tenth year of the papacy of Audiodatus, BSR (Brothers of Saint Rudolph--ed.) in the great basilica of S. Giovanni in Utero at the hands of the Pope himself (or, the Pope himself being mad). Tertiumquid having made the journey of three months and eight days from Sarasota, it being the feast of SS. Merrilius and Lynchus (or, it being at the house of the Merlin and the Wildcat) and unaccompanied by any meteorological signs such as comets, planets running backwards in their

courses, rains of blood or fire, eclipse, or any other such marvel, as the false liars maintain, except a fine rain which all recognized as the sign of God's favor on young Tertiumquid. After the consecration, Tertiumquid returned to Sarasota, across the Alps.

Explicit liber primus.

Incipit liber secundus.

Shortly after Tertiumquid returned to take the see of Sarasota, the prince of that land, Paul, had reason to grow angry with his new bishop. The event was on this wise: Tertiumquid, always zealous for orthodoxy, was wont to play seven times daily upon an instrument called the Nicene Cymbal. This loud clanging brought fear into the hearts of all sinners, including the base and irreverent Paul of Sarasota. Paul, wishing to be rid of the nuisance, tried various and sundry plots and schemes basely to betray Tertiumquid, tempting him with riches and noble favors, food and women, or order to catch him in some dishonor that would unfit him for office. In this end he failed continually, for that Tertiumquid was a just and honest and upright bishop, not to be tempted by fleshly things, but ever intent upon the spiritual.

At last, in desperation as it seems, Paul of Sarasota declared that Tertiumquid was indeed a woman and no man; and that since, as a woman, Tertiumquid could not legitimately sit as Bishop, he had not only the right but the duty forcibly to remove Tertiumquid from the episcopal see of Sarasota. This he did, sending knights to kidnap Tertiumquid while the bishop was praying by night in the cathedral. In his place Paul set Henri David, the Waldensee, who was by nature less inclined toward noise-making, preferring rather meditation, writing, and the cultivation of beans. (There is an entire school of historians who claim that if Gregor Mendel had used beans instead of peas we would already have developed genet.

control. In the present case, however, it seems likely that Henri David would have achieved his Transcendent insights whatever the plant. The tragic life of this man is a story in itself, but here we can only note his great theological works, the Summa Contra Omnes, and his famous Entymologies--ed.)

Tertiumquid, through the agency of certain of his friends, appealed to the Pope. The man then seated on the Throne of Peter was none other than the great and venerable Julian the Apostle, of blessed memory, who in his great clemency and distress at the action of the conniving Paul of Sarasota, dispatched the following epistle:

To the false and apostate knave, no prince, for all princes receive their power and authority from us,

From Julian, bishop of Rome, seated on the throne of Peter, custodian of the keys of heaven, successor of him to whom the Lord said, "whatsoever you bind in earth shall be bound in heaven" and, "you are Peter, and upon this rock I shall found my church," leader of the church triumphant, the consecrator of legitimate bishops and deposer of illegitimate monarchs:

Thrice be you accursed, and know that you bear our stern displeasure, in that you have wrongfully deposed and imprisoned our servant in Christ Tertiumquid from his rightful duties as bishop of Sarasota, on the wholly spurious and insufficient grounds that he is a woman. Know then that you are in error; for Tertiumquid has indeed been legitimately consecrated bishop even by my predecessor on this Throne of Peter, Audiodatus, and as no woman can be a bishop it is thus incontrovertibly true, valid and inescapable that our servant Tertiumquid is a man, whatever his outward, fleshly appearance.

Restore him, then, to his rightful post, and depose that ignoble slave Henri David, who is himself an Armenian and a Monocote and deserving of death.

This letter sent Julian the Apostle to Paul of Sarasota, the king.

Explicit liber secundus.

Incipit liber tertius.

The fighting back and forth, the sending of letters (or, the threatening of apostles) and the wholesale damning of execrable souls to Hell in the period that followed is too long and confused for me, a simple monk of the country to unfold. In brief, then, the results fell out on this wise:

Sabellius, the son of Paul of Sarasota, maintained the struggle with the Pope after his father's death. In this struggle he was unsuccessful, however, for the Pope, assisted by the Frankish king, attacked him by force of arms, and defeated him as he made his last stand in the ancient fort, Mayne. He was then compelled to stand in the snow for three days, living on only a diet of worms, after which he fled to Finland, where he took up the solitary life of a contemplative. (We know from other sources that Sabellius devoted himself to the study of the Scandinavian wildlife, and a collection of flora and fauna, compiled under his name, was circulated as late as the fifteenth century, with the title Finlandia--ed.) Henri David was exiled to Armenia, where he died shortly thereafter. Tertiumquid, then, was restored to his rightful place as Bishop of Sarasota which he maintained until his holy death, which came late and after he had born seven fine sons.

AMDG

Explicit liber tertius.

RELIGIOUS VOYEURISM?

(Judith Beach Nichols intends to continue her column on light reading next issue. The following article on televised worship was inspired in part by Neal Plantinga's "Schullerism and Church Growth" in the most recent Viewpoint.)

by Judith Beach Nichols

Yesterday was a sandwich Sunday: good, wholesome, tough-minded bread at my own church in the morning; the installation of our new pastor in the afternoon, when he and we were fed more of the same; and in between a filling of soppy, tasteless (sic), bland, synthetic well-advertised spread. I refer to the "Hour of Power." You see, I had tried this product before, so I gave a hearty "amen" to Mr. Plantinga's theological dissection last month. But he said little about the televised service, which comes each Sunday during prime time--prime shut-in time, that is, prime time for church-abstainers.

(The service at my own church, which is down Witherspoon Street, a short distance, begins at 10:30, so with a little margin I made it home, to pick up Robert Schuller's production at noon. ADV--for the church of my choice, not the HofP.)

I have been a convalescent several times over the last few years, and have occasionally turned on a service to try to fill a gap, to satisfy a need which was often especially strong in pain and weakness. Last spring, mindful of "Doctor" Schuller's visit to the seminary a year ago (I have an aversion to using that title except for my medical men and my dentist), I gave the Hour of Power a try more than once. I'll be honest: once would have been quite enough to form my opinion of this product--stated in moderate terms above--but (a) I thought I should give the service at Garden Grove Community Church the benefit of the doubt; and (b) frankly

I just couldn't believe what I was seeing and hearing, and a certain power of hypnosis (the power?) made me tune in again to see whether the saccharin level could be maintained. Yes, indeedy! And I do believe that six months' more exposure (judging from yesterday's show) has only served to ripen everything that was already stinking to high heaven. (One might also say this of Liederkrantz, but the comparison puts down a good cheese.)

Is it important to detail some of the excesses of this service show? I think it is, for two reasons: First, the "message" from beginning to end is so meretricious, and for just the reasons Mr. Plantinga analyzed well last month. And the message has affected the use of the medium. Second, I have some real reservations about what happens when television gets into a sactuary on Sunday morning--the medium affecting the message?

Robert Schuller has been hoist by his own petard. His every "winsome" facial expression, his (apparent) groping for just-the-right-word, his exquisite shoulder-hunching and writhing, his sweet mouth molding those luscious reassuring phrases, his closed eyes behind the twinkly glasses raised heavenward--all have become exaggerated to the point of grotesquerie. He appears a complete ham (sham?). He out-acts any actor playing the role of clergyman. He really has nothing to say (nothing to start with, and nothing new from Sunday to Sunday.) The inexhaustible riches of biblical preaching he has sold for a bland restricted mess of pottage. "Ac-cent-u-ate the positive, el-im-inate the negative," as the old jazz song had it. Yesterday we were assured that a (security?) blanket would wrap us about so that nothing negative could reach us. A significant metaphor--but really, we do have to strip off the swaddling clothes before we can walk upright with Christ.

By the way, yesterday he had a word for the lazy stay-at-homes. You may have stopped going to the church near you (says he) because it is so dull! But keep trying. Somewhere you will find...(a church like mine, that will excite, yet protect, massage and soothe?)

Then there are the charming commercials

(several powerful ones to the hour.) They are delivered by a wholesome, clean-cut layman (I assume, though his manner is akin to those pseudo-doctors who used to tell us about headache remedies.) They combine convenience ("this brochure--BUT GOD CAN--just the right size for your coat pocket, or purse",) the intimate touch ("Dr. Schuller wants you to have..."), concrete crassness ("this gold-like ornament honoring God"), and the urgency of those record-album pitchmen ("the last time today... the sooner you write, the sooner...in your home for Christmas"). In this case the bargain seems bigger--all this is "free of course...Dr. Schuller's gift to you...no obligation." Schuller in person was wearing yesterday what looked like an earlier offering--what else but a grain of mustard seed in a dear little bauble on a chain? I seem to recall "mother-of-pearl" crosses from the Philippines last spring. One gets the impression of the eager man of God personally unpacking crates of these objects and sending each off with his blessing. What price pieces of the True Cross?

Well, enough of my carping. Frankly this whole set-up nauseates me. But I have watched some other television services, and I think there are always problems, certainly with the Protestant ones. (The Roman Catholic mass has a grand theatriquity and a beauty of symbolism which enables the camera, perhaps, to get away with it, so long as it's trained up front. The parts of the rituals of Judaism I've seen--and one sees only parts--have been "plainly" done, often with a quiet low-key explanation which I have appreciated. But I am neither a Catholic nor a Jew.) Billy Graham at least has the harder words of the Bible to preach about, whether or not one accepts his narrow view. When I was laid up time-before-last, on Easter, I watched Ernest Campbell and the service at Riverside Church, surely a dignified performance, in fact a little stuffy. The problems with every kind of service televised in toto seem

to center on the camera!

There is something very close to obscene in focusing a camera on worshipers doing worship. When we get a giant close-up of Robert Schuller baptizing (in a kind of triple-smear) new members, see him sign the cross three times on the forehead, then chuck his knuckles under the chin, while the teen-age boy or middle-aged woman cries real tears, we are very close to pornography. The meaning is taken away from the act by the camera, by the thousands watching. When a camera continually pans across the faces of a worshiping congregation, of a choir singing presumably to the glory of God, a miserable artificiality intrudes. With the preacher--much depends on the man, I suppose, but there is a temptation to excess. What is one to think of Schuller's words to his new members, "God loves you, and (pause, chuckle) I love you!"

Perhaps radio is quite a little better. With that medium, at least, the stay-at-home participant must use imagination, and the image may be that of a familiar setting, and of a congregation's eye view, a bit more real, more challenging. I remember many Sunday afternoons in Chicago when the Greater Harvest Baptist Church gave me literally hours of powerful spiritual renewal through its soul music. On the other hand, a cautionary word: a witty unmarried woman I know well once said with an almost straight face, "I hardly dare listen to Bishop Fulton Sheen in my bedroom."

As for me, no voyeur, I can find no substitute for an emotional, undetached, rigorous, in-person hour at my own church, worshiping free of camera coverage with my fellow-sinners, receiving directly the tough sustaining bread of the good news.

TOWARD A RADICAL PRINCETON SEMINARY

(John Wilbur is a recent graduate of Oberlin College and a first-year student in the M.Div. program. He spent last year as a national field staff member of the Morris Udall presidential campaign.)

by John Wilbur

What is the authority of the Princeton Theological Seminary Handbook? This Handbook should be taken seriously as a reflection of the institution which is Princeton Seminary. It is astounding to read such passages as: "Princeton Seminary facilities and resources have been established and can be used only for educational purposes and may not legally or morally be used for partisan political purposes, including campaigning.... Seminary facilities must not be used for political purposes or campaigning.... Faculty and staff have an obligation to perform normal responsibilities, and participation in partisan political programs should not be at the expense of these responsibilities." A faculty member "may not, however, grant an extension beyond term-time for the completion or submission of such work." "Requests for extensions beyond term time will not be granted to offset the effects of tardiness in undertaking required projects, of minor illness during term time, of the pressure of outside work for which other and more appropriate alleviating steps have not been taken, and of the ordinary inconveniences of life that a well organized schedule should be able to absorb."

How does the above reflect the intentions of the opening chapter "Princeton Seminary as a Christian Community." The hope is clearly stated: "We do not conceive of the administration and faculty as over against the student body

but each member of the community is charged with a responsible concern for the conduct and the well-being of the group as a whole.... The community must be a reality, not only as a confession of faith, but also in conduct; not only in worship and prayer, but also in social life and leisure time." Unfortunately, there are norms imposed by this institution working against the development of this idealistic community.

There is too much emphasis placed on the accomplishment of regimented academic work here. At what price is seminary academic work accomplished? A fellow student recently asked in a group discussion: "What precious moments are put off in pursuing our studies?" Precious moments that become dangerously unreachable as this lifestyle is continued.

The question is one of priorities. The Handbook clearly states the priorities advocated by this institution in ranking order: "1) Academic work--study, examinations, term papers, class attendance; 2) All-seminary functions, such as the daily chapel service and other meetings which are officially sponsored; 3) Social life in the dormitories and Campus Center and on the campus; 4) The whole community, to keep it from breaking up into divisive groups." As a Christian I feel these priorities should be modified. Academic work is not the highest priority in Christian life; it should not be any different at seminary. This is precisely the uniqueness of a seminary education as compared to a law school or medical school education. We are not here to become professional apologists; we are here to learn how to live better with God, and minister better to others-- By placing academic work at the top of priorities we are pursuing self-serving goals at the expense of more immediate human needs around us. Nor should we swing to the other extreme. I am recommending a better balance in response

to what I presently see as an unhealthy extreme. The seminary institution imposes this priority rating enforced by strong sanctions.

Princeton Seminary is doing everything it can to preserve itself as a status quo-supporting institution. This is contrary to what Christian faith is about. Growth, that may be of a radical nature, threatens the well-being of this institution. By officially being against any political activity on campus it has legislated its inherent ivory tower nature, sealing itself off from the cries and needs of the world outside. What is even worse is the potential selective use of this rule. Students concerned with the Korean issue and capital punishment freely made their stands known in the Campus Center. Nevertheless, if political on-campus activity became too uncomfortable for the institutional powers, this standing rule then could always be enforced.

By definition a seminary should be a radical institution in confrontation with the status quo. It is tragic to think of this seminary as a tool of society that domesticates our theologies into one acceptable to maintaining the status quo, creating pacifiers to a frustrated society. The seminary should be a place to get worked up about life. We should go out from seminary able to work others up to crave freedom rather than to so willingly give it up.

I came to seminary precisely because of a radical reordering of priorities in my life. The top priority in life is not to become a success in society's terms, acquiring a skill that ensures a lucrative paycheck. Our top priority for being here is to serve God. We serve God by serving others. We serve others by being an intimate member of a faith community and taking responsibility for being a member. It takes time and work to learn how to

draw closer to others in a community. It entails learning to understand the self as well as others. At my college an entire department on human development existed. It is dangerous that nothing like that exists here. CPE does not necessarily have to be the only place to find out how to deal with life. It is possible to learn about it and experience it right within the academic structure of this school.

Human development courses do not fall under the respected title of an intellectual endeavor. Nevertheless we should not be embarrassed about the idea of placing them on an equal footing with academic courses. Someone has pointed out to me that the seminary is often intimidated by Princeton University's preeminent intellectual heritage, but we by no means need bow to the god or reason. Life includes more than reason; we know that, and we should practice it.

I fear that many of the graduates of this seminary can reason eloquently; but how many of them can listen to the needs of their congregation, are perceptive enough from their pulpit loft to know that a certain member in the third row is dying silently from cancer. How many are able to get beyond themselves and reach out to others in need. This is something that can be taught in an academic situation, granted, of course, a radically different type of situation than a lecture format. Human development courses are not bound by due dates nor do they predetermine their goals by the number of pages read.

This institution could be a much more vibrant place if it would begin to encourage real personal growth, growth that goes into areas unknown, purely inspired by God in Christ. The institution should encourage the testing of wings, the experience of freedom. This could begin by implementing the mere basics: individual study programs,

pass/fail in all courses, the ability to create substitutes for certain course requirements, dropping all requirements except on an individual course basis, and the encouragement of testing different lifestyles in housing situations.

In summary, Christianity challenges me to be free. The seminary should be a place to learn how to grow into this freedom. Within this Christian freedom is an awareness of how to serve others and to invoke others to free themselves also. It is then that one experiences the overwhelming sensation of how beautiful it is to be alive. The seminary needs to concentrate on the development of the entire being in becoming Christians. To emphasize the intellectual side at the exclusion of others is to kill precious life. A healthier balance must be maintained.

As the end of first semester approaches and the pace becomes more frantic I suspect there will be many panicked and sallow faces on campus. I also suspect that those people will not be reading this article. I would like to tell them to relax; we need not take that academic priority quite so seriously. This institution needs to be radicalized. It needs to reorder its priorities away from the academic work and towards the whole community. I hope this changing process will gain momentum during my three years here. If this occurs, only then will I be proud to say that I am a graduate of Princeton Seminary. Only then will Princeton stand out as a seminary for others to follow. I will be working towards this goal everyday that I am here. I hope that others will join me.

LET A SLEEPING CHRISTIAN LIE?

(Steve Muse is a graduate of Davidson College and is a first-year student in the M.Div. program. The article was originally submitted under the pseudonym Rip Van Winkle, and the author, while finally agreeing to have his own name appear above his work, still believes that the pseudonym is important for understanding the article. But, heck, Steve's not even Dutch.)

by J. Steven Muse

Only an idiot in the same room with a sleeping cobra would wake it up.

I sense a distracting tension here among some of us which stems partially at least from what seems to me to be a distorted notion of what community means. It's the "Jesus was a nice guy" syndrom to some extent, and it is implicitly alive in much of our collective interaction at the seminary. In the cafeteria all the faces have become vaguely familiar and more or less associated with a name and yet I do not know them. Why should I? In the "real world" a person has some close friends, some acquaintences, etc., and they take their significance naturally according to how much time and activity one spends with them. But here the budding young ministers are not free to walk among their thoughts in the midst of people comfortably. Silence is isolation here, not creativity or rest. Being alone with oneself is a threat to community not a doorway to personal transformation. One must "be with the guys and gals." Even in the dorm, the privacy of one's own room comes to be something of a minister's "black veil" and suspicions creep under the jamb, "Why don't we know him...that strange silent one?"

We must remember that Jesus often remained to himself and I suspect that it is because of this that his life was constantly a creative act. To associate with him was to be changed in some significant way.

Each of our individual lives in its own way should recreate those who encounter it, but we are diverted from this by our shallow understanding of what Christian community involves. I suspect that we simply want to be too comfortable. This in turn alienates the sensitive individuals among us who see the destructiveness of "hanging together with the guys over a beer" or even a passage of the Chrurch Dogmatics (that typo may be significant so I shall leave it) if it is done in a certain easy, sloppy way. It's the "hanging together" that is a sleep causing and sustaining cancer, making it increasingly more difficult for us to accept Christian responsibility outside our textbooks and classes. We stand starry-eyed before the neon lights of "community" grinning warmly from ear to ear (and perhaps considering the zen of drinking beer together... or perhaps not). And yet, community is nothing other than shared humanity--but not shared sleep! Christ is asking us, as love itself compells, to dare a deep empassioned honesty together and the struggle incurred by it as we work toward our individual and collective fruition.

I am not proposing any "radical perspective" for Christianity, nor am I attacking the good people here for lack of good "will" (careful with that word!), but I am I hope tickling the noses of some sleeping people. I want us to remember that when we talk of "community" we must remember that we are talking about people who are individually unique sharing that uniqueness and the responsibilities that that entails. There is a dialectic between individual and community that must be creative from both ends. To sink into one or the other extreme can be dangerous, but on the other hand what often looks like that superficially is in fact an individual or a community's intense struggle which calls forth our mature powers. This has been the way of mankind's foremost catalysts in every field. We must remember how

how lonely and disturbed Luther, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche often were, for anyone who ventures beyond the normative dreams of the communal nest like a certain seagull we all know and love is ridiculed, or misunderstood as a heretic or a hermit or as is the case when communities of "nice Christian guys and gals" are concerned, made to feel (quite unintentionally) as though (s)he were wearing a black viel among his fellows.

Finally, let it be constantly before us that Jesus was not primarily a "nice and sociable guy." This is the normative product of a satisfied, gregarious materialistic culture that is slowly but surely turning our wills and so our love to putty. Friendship is and always was community, but it takes more than smiles and yapping mouths. It takes work. Encounter burns and untwists human putty so that it can stand alone, together within the I AM-God who is Creative Love. Neither community nor the honesty of which it is made can be sweetly, simply comfortable--that is nearly death itself--rather it is a burning bush that is not consumed. Dare we ask of ourselves real community? We must first confront our presumed honesty and strength and emptiness in a long and constant silence--a silence that heals by revealing a world to us we have not heard and only rarely touched through the thick hide of our community. So if you see him on the street walking with his head turned down, think before you pray for his affliction. And if you meet her eyes too heavily--before you feel compelled to speak or smile, ask yourself why you are doing it and what you are really saying. And when your life is full and you and I are but faces of unknown particularities to one another, though living in the same town or even the same dorm, ask yourself why you want to "get to know me" and why we haven't encountered each other before. Indeed it may not be so difficult. Love and community are simple, but let us not make them shallow as well.

two poems by Rodger L. Pettichord

IF I WERE IN CHARGE OF THE CAT AND THE BIRD

I wouldn't hold the bird to song
or keep the cat upon the fence
tail twitching staring all day long.
I'd have the bird conclude its piece
pack its music in its craw
and fly to face the beast.
Or have the cat begin to move
along the fence toward the bird to prove
whatever cats were born to prove.
As is, it's silly stuff.
The bird is simply random song
the cat is merely muscled fluff.
I'd have the actors act, the scene get tough:
how else the bird to show that beauty's short,
the cat to show that waiting's not enough?

THE LIBRARIAN

Do you know your eyes are grey and distant?
Here and now the children squirm,
adults cough, books drop, pages turn
--but you see none of this.
Far away, beyond this day and place,
a golden people load their caravan with
iridescent silks, ivory myths,
ropes of brass bells, timeless scrolls.
Men in caftans whip their camels up,
chant the ageless chant in voices low
and urgent: "Let's get moving! Hey, let's go!"
Their straight eyes turn toward distant cities.
So your eyes appear to turn away:
your eyes reflect the suns of other days.

SEVEN BEAUTIES: WERTMULLER'S UGLY SURVIVAL EPIC

(Peter Bauer is a middler and a graduate of Portland State University. The following is a review of Lina Wertmuller's 1976 film Seven Beauties, which was shown at McCarter Theatre October 19. Although Seven Beauties is no longer showing in the area, the review anticipates the screening of yet another Wertmuller film--Swept Away (1974), scheduled for a March 15 showing at McCarter.)

by Peter Bauer

One of the most highly acclaimed film makers of this past year has been Lina Wertmuller. She is currently the only prominent woman film director in the United States and Europe. Wertmuller has been making films for ten years, but it was not until the release of Swept Away in 1974 that she received serious attention. Her newest film Seven Beauties is another achievement to an impressive film career.

Seven Beauties is a film that is filled with so many ideas and images that the viewer is virtually overwhelmed. It is at once a kind of Brechtian primer for survival, a farce, and a disorderly epic. The story of Seven Beauties concerns that of Pasqualino (Giancarlo Giannini), a small-time hood from Naples who charmed the ladies and defended the honor of his seven poor sisters--his "seven beauties," hence the nickname. His Dantean journey takes him from crime in Naples, to internment in a mental hospital, release to fight in the army, capture and imprisonment in a concentration camp, forced sex with the woman camp commandant (superbly portrayed by Shirley Stoker), and liberation back to Italy to produce fifteen children.

Wertmuller portrays Pasqualino as

one of the survivors of our society whose main goal in life is simply staying alive. He is a kind of everyman, who is possessed with that thirst for life which outlasts both ideas and ideals. Pasqualino is an imitation everything--lover, soldier, bandit, assassin, and man of honor--whose only grip on reality is a basic affirmation of the life force. His desperation to survive has a kind of magnificence about it, and produces admiration from the viewing audience.

Lina Wertmuller defines herself in interviews as a Socialist Realist. Therefore, she uses cinema for the purpose of illustrating the degradation and humiliation of capitalist society. It is the society that forces Pasqualino to make the choices he does in order to stay alive. "Society is us, the result of our choices," she once said, and while Wertmuller may be committed to political action that can alleviate social conditions, she never fails to make clear that political action is always dependent upon the unpredictable human response.

I think that there is also theological significance in Seven Beauties. Near the beginning of the film, there is a scene in which a procession of Jewish men and women climb a hill, remove their clothes, pile them neatly, and stand in mute resignation waiting to be executed by a Nazi firing squad. This death scene in a German forest is witnessed by Pasqualino who realizes not only the absurdity of the war, but the terrifying absurdity of his own life. This sense of desperation and meaninglessness is enhanced by the concentration camp scenes. Here Wertmuller utilizes paradox again. And this is essentially her theological statement. For Pasqualino, his chance for freedom rests with the camp commandant. He hates her, yet he must try to love her in order to gain freedom and to survive.

What is especially impressive about Seven Beauties is Wertmuller's use of color and sound. She and her brilliant cinematographer (Tonino Delli Colli) use pastel tones throughout; the light and color of Italy are warm and amber, or (for Naples after the liberation) gold and red. Fog pervades the German forest, turning it more gray than green, and the same mist seems to hang over the concentration camp. This haze is actually lime dust from the crematoria, but its similarity to the mists of the forest scenes result in an equally unreal environment. At the beginning there are graphic destruction scenes from World War II, particularly of the fire bombing of Dresden, with a decadent 1950's jazz piece as background music. This creates a powerful discord between image and sound, a paradox as striking as Pasqualino's life.

Seven Beauties exhibits an effective cinematographic epic. Pasqualino's triumph is neither triumph nor a tragedy, but simply the expression of the life force--that thirst which governs the choices he makes, not only in the concentration camp, but also in his life in Naples. For Wertmuller, everyone--Pasqualino, the mafia boss, the camp commandant--all are right, or partly so, and if it is right to die defiantly, it is also right to survive by whatever means are at hand. Lina Wertmuller takes big risks, like Stanley Kubrick and Robert Altman, other contemporary film makers, and manages to bring them off. Seven Beauties establishes her talent as that of the genius.

poets in this issue:

Rodger L. Pettichord distinguished himself in the area of poetry long before his appearance in this issue of Viewpoint. Rodger is a graduate of Washington State University, where, rumor has it, he did Ph.D. work in literature. Rodger is a middler.

Stephen Hollaway's name and psyche should now be familiar to most Viewpoint readers. He received an A.B. from Princeton University and an M.A. in Southern Literature from Duke University.

Bruce A. Chapman is a graduate of The Citadel. He is currently a second-year student in the M.Div. program.

SEVEN WORDS OF THE NEARLY BLIND

by Stephen Hollaway

(for the women of Princeton)

I

The lust of the nearly blind lacks focus.
It zooms rampant in the space between the eye and God,
seeing near and far with equal desire.
It is the fate of the halfway healed.
It is the fate of the neither here nor there.

II

I am a baby staring at his mother his lover.
My lenses strain in darkness.
I love what I see:
the vague, the warmth.

III

I squint to love you.
I see men as trees walking,
and trees am men.
I wait for spittle.
I wait for a touch.

IV

God, as a target, is hard to miss.
My own right hand is hard to miss.
But you, in between, are out of focus.
I miss you very much.

V

I am a child on a street corner
waiting for an offer.
I do not know what the offer is
or who might make it.
It is something I have heard of.

VI

I have heard that the blind love
with the precision of touch.
Those who see love at a distance
or close their eyes to love.
If God is love is blind,
let him touch my eyes.

VII

You who wait for me to see you:
make yourself clear.
Make yourself no image of God,
no mother, no tree,
no hot right hand.
Seduce me with a vision of the obvious.

